SANCCOB™
saves seabirds

INTEGRATED REPORT 2021–2022

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MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

The Living Planet Report has just been updated and paints an alarming picture for nature and people. Monitored wildlife populations – mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish – have seen a 69% decline on average since 1970 (WWF's Living Planet Report 2022). It's against this backdrop that world leaders are due to meet at the 15th Conference of Parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) in a few weeks, for a once-in-a-decade opportunity to course-correct for the sake of people and the planet. World leaders will have an opportunity to reset our broken relationship with the natural world and deliver a healthier, more sustainable future for all with an ambitious nature-positive global biodiversity agreement. Let's hope this opportunity is not squandered.

Closer to home, the story of the African penguin is an example of this escalating natural crisis. When penguin numbers plummet it tells us that something is seriously wrong in our ocean ecosystems. I applaud SANCCOB and our aligned NGO partners, who are working courageously to secure the future of the African penguin.

With each passing year, I am privileged to witness the awe-inspiring works of SANCCOB staff, interns and volunteers, and this year in review, under the leadership of Natalie Maskell, has been a period of further development and success. Despite the challenges that southern African seabirds are facing, SANCCOB continues to work vigorously to

protect them and to prevent the extinction of the endangered African penguin. As you will see in this Integrated Report, the impact of the conservation work carried out by the SANCCOB team is significant and I thank you for your unwavering commitment and dedication to seabird conservation.

Although the impact of Covid-19 was still felt during the year in review, the ease of travel and other restrictions enabled us to resume our operations and in-field work, although a negative impact on human capacity was still felt because of the decreased number of international volunteers. With local support we managed to maintain the excellent level of care provided to our seabird patients.

The final release of the Cape cormorant chicks rescued from Robben Island in January 2021, was followed by a further devastating blow to the species when an outbreak of Avian Influenza resulted in the death of more than 15% of the already endangered Cape cormorant population. This outbreak also resulted in the death of over 200 African penguins, a loss that the species can ill afford. The effect of the outbreak was taxing on SANCCOB staff and volunteers, because it coincided with the annual period of African penguin chick abandonments, which led to an off-site temporary quarantine facility established for new admissions to mitigate the risk to other seabirds in our care.

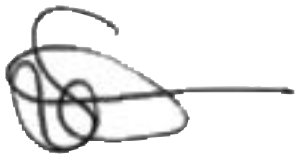
SANCCOB also admitted more than 130 Cape gannet juveniles and young chicks from Lambert's Bay in joint rescue operations with CapeNature; 51 birds were admitted in May 2021 after being left behind in the gannet colony when others fledged, and the other 79 gannets were rescued due to a high risk of drowning because of nest flooding by high sea swells in January 2022. SANCCOB Gqeberha experienced an influx of African penguin chicks during the year in review, where 118 displaced and at-risk chicks were rescued from Bird Island in the Eastern Cape following nest flooding due to winter storms. Mass rescue operations have certainly become more prevalent.

With regard to ship-to-ship fuel transfers at sea in the Eastern Cape, we were thrilled with the outcome to reinstate the moratorium on bunkering activities in Algoa Bay, after SANCCOB, with the support of BirdLife South Africa, WESSA, Nelson Mandela Bay University and Zwartkops Conservancy, launched an online petition to enhance public awareness to oppose the decision to lift the moratorium.

There have been remarkable strides in the establishment of the Namibian Foundation for the Conservation of Seabirds (NAMCOB), and I am pleased to announce that SANCCOB has already commenced preparedness and response training for Namibian nationals. SANCCOB has drafted a National Oiled Wildlife Contingency Plan for Namibia, which will be integrated into the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan, and this is the first time the country has adopted preparedness measures that encompass its most vulnerable seabird species during an oil pollution incident.

We are grateful to our partners in conservation, namely BirdLife South Africa, CapeNature, the City of Cape Town, Robben Island Museum, and South African National Parks, and we are incredibly thankful to our donors that have continued to support our cause. On behalf of the SANCCOB Board of Directors, we thank you for your continued support; we know that we can only successfully serve South Africa's seabirds if we work together.

To the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued counsel, commitment, and dedication to SANCCOB. With the support received from all stakeholders SANCCOB will continue to persevere to bolster wild populations of seabirds.



SAMANTHA PETERSEN
Chairperson

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A YEAR OF RENEWAL AND POSSIBILITIES

As more and more people became vaccinated and the impact of Covid-19 started to ease, SANCCOB celebrated its 54th year of conserving seabirds in southern Africa, and the team entered the new financial year with a sense of hope and renewal, looking forward to opportunities that had been put on hold during the pandemic.

SANCCOB has always been known for reversing the decline of seabird populations through the rescue, rehabilitation and release of ill, injured, abandoned, and oiled seabirds; however, this report highlights the expanded scope of work going beyond these reactive activities and the inordinate strides being made in seabird conservation.

Along with the lack of food availability and disease, we are seeing the harsh realities of climate change causing extreme weather events that are leading to abandonment and breeding failures, and these events are unfortunately being observed with increasing frequency. The result is that the African penguin species is in crisis. Population numbers are at an all-time low of approximately 10,000 breeding pairs in the wild in South Africa, which represents a population loss greater than 95%. In the past five years alone, the Eastern Cape population has declined by 80%. The African penguin needs our help, and we need action from every person near and far to ensure that future generations live in a world where the African penguin exists. It is against these odds that the SANCCOB team pushes forward every day with passion, resilience, and dedication to make a difference. I am immensely proud of the significant work being done.

Some of the highlights of our research work include the success of the 10-year running Transponder Project, reporting on more than 11,000 African penguins being fitted with transponders, and ground readers installed in six of the main colonies. This provides valuable information to enable assessments to be made on survival rates, population numbers and breeding information. We have also partnered on acoustic studies in collaboration with BirdLife South Africa, as well as local and international academic institutions, to examine at-sea communication among African penguins.

Our in-situ conservation efforts with SANCCOB's Ranger Project have continued as a successful initiative in the monitoring and protection of the penguin colonies, and in 2022 we plan to expand the project to include a Seabird Ranger on Dassen Island off the west coast, as well as a second Seabird Ranger on Bird Island in the Eastern Cape.

Looking ahead, we are eager to see the progress being made on the expansion of SANCCOB's expertise to improve the protection of seabirds in the Namibian Islands Marine Protected Area (NIMPA), in our role as founding member of the Namibian Foundation for the Conservation of Seabirds (NAMCOB).

Regarding our financial performance, BDO South Africa Inc. once again issued an unqualified audit opinion for the 2022 Annual Financial Statements, and the statements reflect a healthy balance sheet with an increase in assets.

None of this work would be possible without the hard working and devoted SANCCOB team; and I thank you for your passion and hard work.

A sincere thank you to our partners, who work alongside us, our donors who enable us and our unwavering Board of Directors, who continue to guide and support us.

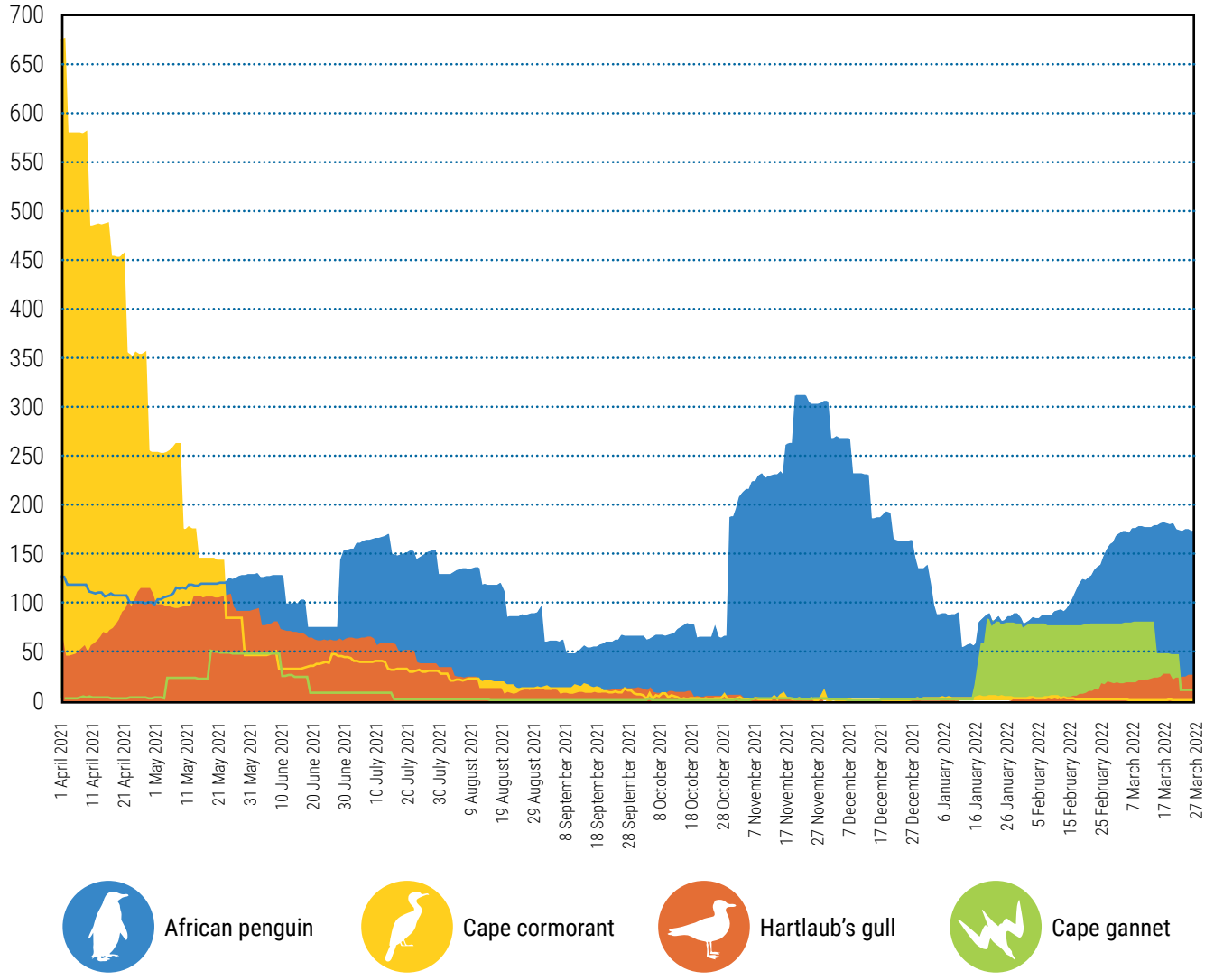
Sincerely,

NATALIE MASKELL
Chief Executive Officer

SEABIRD REHABILITATION

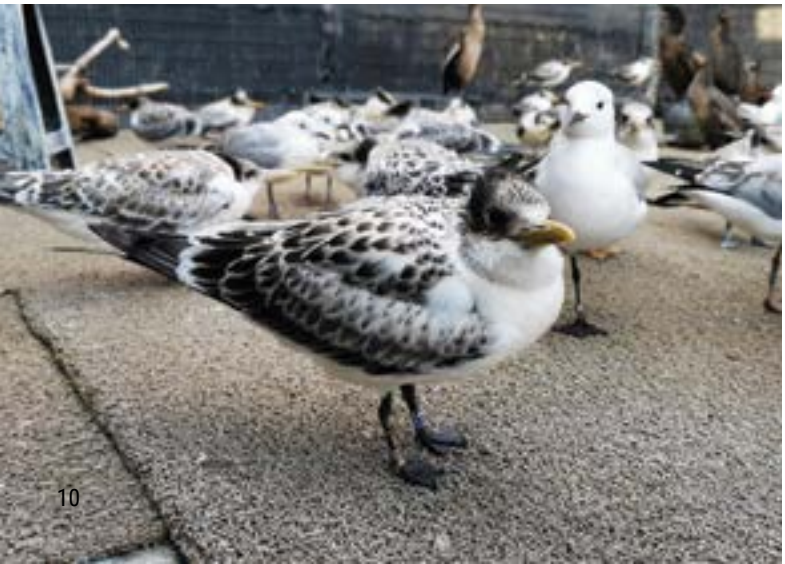
Despite the numerous challenges facing South African seabirds, including the outbreak of Avian Influenza, an oil spill, and several mass abandonment events of African penguin eggs and chicks, the SANCCOB team remains committed to the rehabilitation of sick, injured, and abandoned seabirds. The work performed by SANCCOB is considerable, and we are proud of the role that our extraordinary team has played in seabird conservation. During the reporting period, almost 2,400 seabirds were admitted into rehabilitative care at the Cape Town and Gqeberha centres. African penguin admissions totalled 1,170, with 813 penguins admitted to the Cape Town centre and 357 penguins admitted to the Gqeberha centre. African penguin admissions at the Gqeberha centre peaked during July and August when our Seabird Ranger, in collaboration with South African National Parks (SANParks), rescued 199 chicks abandoned on Bird Island, Algoa Bay, during winter storms. African penguin admissions at the Cape Town centre peaked during July and November, when 118 penguin chicks were admitted due to nest flooding resulting from heavy rains. During November, the annual admission of chicks abandoned by their moulting parents was further complicated by an outbreak of the Avian Influenza disease. Read more on the following pages on how the SANCCOB team adapted once more to very challenging circumstances.

PATIENTS IN CARE



The sharp decline in the number of Cape cormorants in rehabilitative care (yellow) indicates multiple large release occasions. During summer, the patients in care were predominantly African penguins.

TOP SIX SPECIES REHABILITATED AT SANCCOB



CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ENDANGERED CAPE GANNETS

Each year, SANCCOB admits Cape gannet juveniles and/or chicks from Bird Island in Lambert's Bay. Referred to as the 'stragglers', they are the last birds left in the colony after the others have fledged. In May 2021, CapeNature rescued 51 abandoned Cape gannet chicks, and of these, 92% were successfully released after rehabilitation. In January 2022, 85 abandoned Cape gannet chicks were rescued from Bird Island as their nests had been flooded by extremely high sea swells. These increasingly frequent extreme weather events are linked to climate change and are a threat to breeding seabird colonies. Although most birds admitted to SANCCOB were reasonably healthy, some were dehydrated, but despite this, we are pleased to report a release rate of 93% for this rescue.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT: SEABIRDS IN URBAN AREAS

We continue to witness wildlife crimes against seabirds in urban environments. Occurring mainly along the Atlantic Seaboard, seabirds are affected by disturbances caused by residents and/or building contractors. During the reporting period, over 200 Hartlaub's gull eggs and chicks, abandoned by their parents as a direct result of disturbance by human activities, were admitted to SANCCOB Cape Town. More than 30 Swift tern chicks were rescued with the support of First Responders at the Pavilion building at Cape Town's V&A Waterfront, when a rooftop disturbance caused the parents to flee their nests, with the chicks attempting to follow, but as they were unable to fly, fell and sustained severe physical injuries, including fractured bones.

SANCCOB has worked on these disturbance issues for many years, with varying degrees of success. Ultimately, dealing with conflict between seabirds and humans requires support from a multitude of stakeholders, along with a sound long-term awareness component, as a reactive approach is both ineffective and costly for SANCCOB. To reduce turmoil among nesting gulls and terns, we are working with the Criminal Investigations and Prosecution Division of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) to issue an informative letter to residents and building owners along the Atlantic Seaboard regarding human-wildlife conflict. Whilst not endangered, both Hartlaub's gulls and Swift terns are protected by the Threatened or Protected Species (ToPS) legislation, which prohibits 'harassment' or disturbance of the species. Furthermore, Hartlaub's gulls are endemic to the Western Cape, and these avian species play a functional role in our ecosystem. A greater effort is required for future building plans to ensure that plans provide for rooftops that are built in a way to discourage seabird breeding, and that maintenance planning occurs outside of breeding season.

Northern Giant Petrel resting in the pen after a meal

White-chinned petrel undergoing veterinary evaluation

PETREL POWER

The threats faced by Southern Ocean species at sea are predominantly fisheries-related mortalities and the effects of climate change. SANCCOB admitted five different species of petrel for rehabilitation during the period under review: Northern and Southern giant petrels, a Great-winged petrel, a White-chinned petrel, and a European storm petrel, which weighed only 20 g. Southern Ocean seabirds stay at sea nearly their entire lives, returning to land only to breed, and these birds do not cope well in a captive environment and suffer from acute stress. To highlight one particular admission case, a Northern giant petrel was treated for a severe toe injury, which required amputation, fortunately, the petrel recovered well and was successfully released in False Bay.

CHICK BOLSTERING

SANCCOB is internationally recognised as a leader in African penguin chick rearing. The Chick Bolstering Project, which officially started in 2006, has led to over 9,500 African penguin chicks being admitted to the Chick Rearing Unit (CRU) in Cape Town, with 81% being successfully released back into the wild. The rescue and artificial rearing of African penguin chicks was listed as a conservation intervention in the (first) African Penguin Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP), gazetted in 2013 and in the subsequent second (draft) BMP. Historically SANCCOB received most of its eggs and chicks during the winter breeding season, however when studying the current trends in breeding phenology and taking climate change into account, eggs that are being laid in the early and late months of the year (i.e. in summer and spring) are being abandoned due to increased heat events, while increasing severity of storm events during the winter months (more intense rain and storms with high swells) are leading to increased abandonments and chick rescues during those months, as seen in recent years. As such, the number of admissions has increased both in terms of volume and in frequency of periods throughout the year. Over the last seven years, SANCCOB has seen a significant increase in the number of abandoned eggs and chicks being admitted to the CRU, which has become SANCCOB's natural progression, and this activity directly impacts the African penguin population, which is now more important than ever before.

During the reporting period, 904 African penguin chicks were admitted to both SANCCOB centres. Most chicks admitted were rescued from the Stony Point colony in the Western Cape and Bird Island in the Eastern Cape, primarily as they had been abandoned by their moulting parents. African penguins must undergo a successful moult in order to hunt for food without being hampered by the cold ocean waters. Once penguins have fattened sufficiently to induce moult, they remain on land for approximately

SANCCOB and CapeNature clearing abandoned chicks at Stony Point penguin colony in Betty's Bay

Abandoned African penguin chicks during transportation . to SANCCOB

three weeks, shedding their old, worn-out feathers and gaining the shiny new feathers necessary to maintain insulation. However, during this critical life stage, they are unable to hunt and provide for their chicks, resulting in abandonment.

In January 2022, SANCCOB assisted conservation partners SANParks and the City of Cape Town with the rescue of chicks from the Simon's Town colony due to extreme heat conditions. As with flooding events, severe heat impacts breeding penguins, and it is vitally important that nests are monitored to identify if and when to intervene. Seabird Rangers funded by SANCCCOB continue to demonstrate that boots on the ground allow for timeous interventions.

Over 400 African penguin eggs, rescued due to unsafe nesting, extreme weather events, or abandonment, were admitted to SANCCOB's specialised Chick Rearing Unit in Cape Town during the first quarter of 2022. Unfortunately, many of the eggs brought to SANCCOB were not viable on arrival but of the 290 eggs that were admitted for artificial incubation, 126 chicks were successfully released.

PENGUIN AND SEABIRD RANGER PROGRAMME

SANCCOB's Penguin and Seabird Ranger Programme has proven to be a crucial addition to seabird conservation, particularly for endangered species such as the African penguin, Cape cormorant and Cape gannet. Our Penguin and Seabird Rangers form the front-line of saving seabirds, and are valued members of the SANCCOB team.

SANCCOB collaborates with conservation authorities, such as CapeNature, SANParks, City of Cape Town, and Robben Island Museum, as well as the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), to work toward the protection and restoration of the natural habitat essential for seabirds to survive and the marine ecosystem to function. Throughout the years, SANCCOB has worked with government and conservation authorities to implement several management programmes and projects to conserve the African penguin and other seabird species.

SANCCOB supports seven Penguin and Seabird Rangers at four vital seabird colonies (Robben Island, Simon's Town, Stony Point, and Bird Island in Algoa Bay), and we are in the process of adding a Penguin and Seabird Ranger at Dassen Island, and another at Bird Island. These Rangers play a critical role in seabird conservation by identifying and rescuing injured, oiled, or abandoned seabirds and eggs and transporting them to one of our two SANCCOB centres. The Rangers collect valuable data which is used for scientific research, and they ensure that the natural habitat of seabirds is maintained. In addition, they also play an important role in monitoring and ensuring human-wildlife co-existence. The skill and dedication of SANCCOB's Penguin and Seabird Rangers has saved thousands of endangered African penguins and other seabirds that would otherwise not have survived.

ROBBEN ISLAND
PENGUIN AND SEABIRD RANGER

Robben Island is situated in Table Bay and is recognised as a South African National Heritage Site and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Robben Island is protected environmentally by the South African Government and managed by Robben Island Museum, and is recognised as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) by BirdLife South Africa, as well as a global Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) by IUCN. The island falls within the Robben Island Marine Protected Area (MPA) of 580 km (proclaimed in 2019).

It is critically important for SANCCOB to have a Penguin and Seabird Ranger stationed on Robben Island, and working in collaboration with Robben Island Management. During the reporting period this role was fulfilled by Andile Mdluli, who left SANCCOB's employ in March 2022 to join the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) on Marion Island, and we are proud of Andile, who will continue important seabird conservation work in the sub-Antarctic. Nicholas Ngcathu, a former intern with the Environmental Unit on Robben Island, has taken on the role of Penguin and Seabird Ranger on Robben Island, effective April 2022. The island has the longest standing monitoring of African penguins' breeding success, which was started after the MV Treasure oil spill in 2000, to evaluate how oiled and rehabilitated birds cope in the wild. Robben Island is also an important monitoring site for fishing closures and the effects of fish availability on the survival of the African penguin.

STONY POINT PENGUIN AND SEABIRD RANGER

Stony Point Nature Reserve is situated in the coastal town of Betty's Bay in the Overberg and lies on an old whaling station site. During 2021 it was home to approximately 1,600 breeding pairs of African penguins. Also present in the colony are four species of cormorant, each classified into one of nine IUCN Red List Categories: the Crowned cormorant (Least concern), Cape cormorant (Endangered), White-breasted cormorant (Least concern), and Bank cormorant (Endangered), all of which breed on the outer rocks. The nature reserve is environmentally protected by the South African Government and is managed by CapeNature. It falls within the 21 km Betty's Bay MPA (3 km long, extending 3.6 km out to sea), and forms part of the Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, and the public can view the seabirds up close, via a boardwalk through the colony.

Threats to seabirds breeding at this colony include the dramatic decrease in the pelagic fish stocks due to competition with commercial fisheries; predation by land-based predators such as mongoose, caracal and leopard, as well as dogs and cats; human-induced disturbance and activity; extreme weather events (heavy rains and flooding); and chronic pollution by crude oil or other pollutants. SANCCOB identified the importance of a full-time Penguin and Seabird Ranger at Stony Point due to the frequency of African penguin chick abandonment incidents, both during extreme weather events and when birds start moulting while still rearing chicks.

Gavin Petersen has been working as SANCCOB's Penguin and Seabird Ranger at the Stony Point colony since 2019, in collaboration with CapeNature. Gavin was awarded the very honourable BirdLife South Africa Owl award in 2021 due to being an inspiring example of how dedicated field rangers can promote the conservation of endangered seabirds. In July 2021, Gavin was instrumental in removing 69 African penguin chicks and 36 eggs from the colony after severe winter storms resulted in the flooding and destruction of nests.

SIMON'S TOWN PENGUIN AND SEABIRD RANGERS

The Simon's Town colonies are protected environmentally by the South African Government, with some areas managed by SANParks and others by the City of Cape Town (CoCT). Simon's Town is situated 35 km south of Cape Town and the 2-ha protected site consists of small beaches. There are several boardwalks where tourists may observe the penguins up close, and visitors can access beaches that the penguins inhabit. It is recognised as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) by BirdLife South Africa as well as a global Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) by IUCN.

Threats to the African penguin include predation by land-based predators such as genets and caracal, as well as dogs and cats, and although disturbance by tourists is a concern, there are measures in place to control excessive disturbance. The education and tourism value of the site is immense with thousands of visitors wanting to view and interact with African penguins, hence, SANCCOB has four Penguin and Seabird Rangers stationed in Simon's Town to monitor the level of human/wildlife interaction in the area.

The Simon's Town Penguin and Seabird Ranger Project has been running since 2016, in partnership with CoCT, SANParks, SANCCOB, and Nature Connect. Currently, the Penguin and Seabird Rangers, namely Mikaela Slier, Mpumelelo Mabutyana, Vardaman Hahndiek and Kashiefa Amos, are supervised by Mashudu Mashau who is employed by CoCT.

BIRD ISLAND PENGUIN AND SEABIRD RANGER

The Algoa Bay islands are a collection of islands in Algoa Bay: the St Croix group, comprising St Croix, Jahleel and Brenton islands; and the Bird Island group, consisting of Bird, Seal and Stag islands, as well as Black Rocks. The islands are environmentally protected by the South African Government and managed by SANParks as part of the Greater Addo Elephant National Park. The group of islands in Algoa Bay are recognised as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) by BirdLife South Africa as well as a global Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) by IUCN, and fall within the 1,200 km^2 Addo Elephant MPA (proclaimed in 2019).

The Algoa Bay islands together host the largest global populations of Cape gannets, classified as Endangered per the IUCN Red List. Until recently, St Croix Island was the world's largest breeding colony of African penguins but has dramatically declined by over 70% since 2014, likely due to industrial expansion and anthropogenic activities.

Threats to these seabird populations are similar to the other island colonies but with the additional human-related disturbance with an increase in ship traffic associated with the nearby Port of Ngqura, as well as increased risk of oil pollution threats relating to ship-to-ship fuel bunkering permitted in the bay. SANCCOB has responded to three oil spills in recent years (2016, 2019 and 2021) caused by this high-risk activity, and as a result of this risk, it is essential to have a Penguin and Seabird Ranger stationed at these islands. Zamokuhle Lazola, SANCCOB's Penguin and Seabird Ranger, is based on Bird Island and also assists SANParks with monitoring St Croix Island, which is uninhabited by people. Zamokuhle plays a crucial role in rescuing and stabilising seabirds on the islands, as transportation of birds off the islands can be logistically challenging.

PARTNERING WITH BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA AND CAPENATURE TO ESTABLISH A NEW PENGUIN COLONY AT DE HOOP NATURE RESERVE

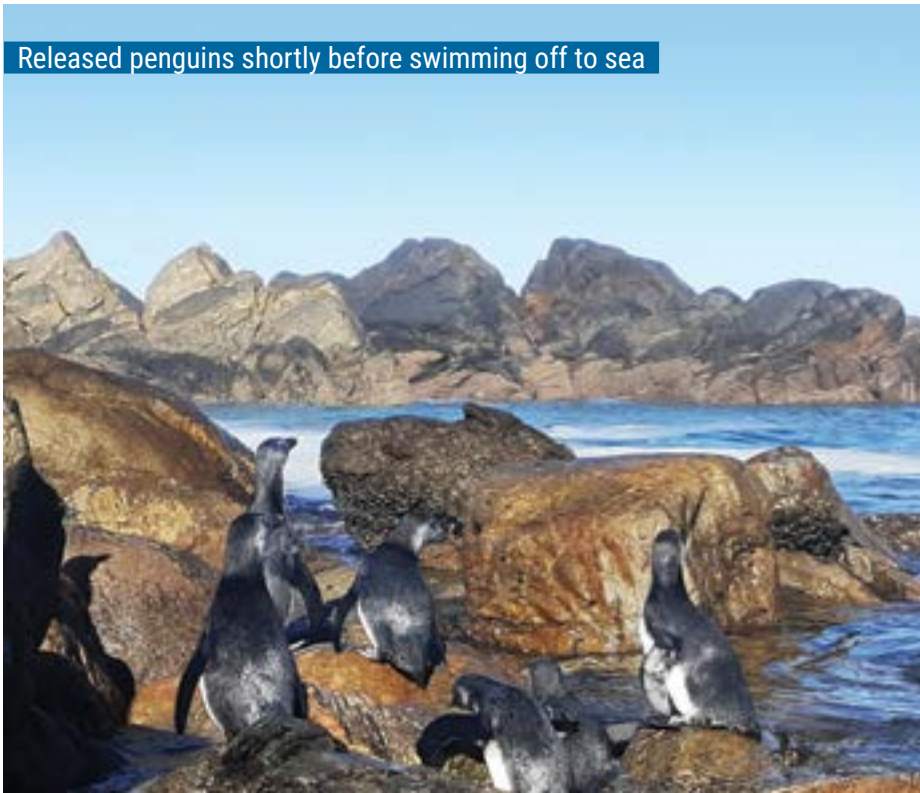
SANCCOB, BirdLife South Africa and CapeNature have partnered on an exciting project to re-establish a penguin colony at De Hoop Nature Reserve, where there is more food available than on the West Coast. African penguin numbers have declined by over 60% in the last 30 years, mainly due to a lack of food. In response, BirdLife South Africa partnered with CapeNature and SANCCOB to create a new breeding colony for African penguins in an area of high fish abundance. The area has been protected by a predator-proof electric fence, and artificial decoy penguins have been positioned around the colony, with penguin sounds played over loudspeakers to make it more attractive to penguins. 88 African penguins that were hand-raised at SANCCOB were released in three different batches between June and August. In each batch of penguins released, trackers were attached on individual birds to gather information on their movements. Once released, they leave the colony site and are expected to spend the next few years at sea, learning how to fend for themselves, and prospecting different colonies. Project partners hope that these penguins have imprinted on the De Hoop colony site and that they will return to moult or to breed when they are ready to do so.

CapeNature

BirdLife SOUTH AFRICA

SANCCOB™ saves seabirds

Placing trackers onto penguins before release



Released penguins shortly before swimming off to sea

SKILLS TRANSFER

Our daily operations depend on dedicated volunteers and interns who selflessly donate their time to the labour-intensive work of seabird rehabilitation and conservation. As such, the development of skills, ranging from theoretical training to hands-on practical tasks, forms an important part of our work. As Covid-19 restrictions started lifting, international volunteers once again joined SANCCOB's volunteer programme, and their return was warmly welcomed.

SANCCOB hosts regular training workshops for Seabird Rangers, to maintain and enhance skills such as seabird stabilisation and transportation.

Key responders along Namibia's coastline were identified and invited for training at SANCCOB on the topics of seabird handling, oiled wildlife response, and stabilisation. This training forms part of the establishment of the Namibian Foundation for the Conservation of Seabirds (NAMCOB), an organisation founded by SANCCOB and other partners.

SEABIRD SPECIES ADMITTED TO SANCCOB WESTERN CAPE

	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
AFRICAN PENGUIN	**18**	**31**	**11**	**118**	**21**	**41**	**41**	**275**	**26**	**70**	**79**	**82**
OTHER SEABIRDS												
CAPE GANNET	6	52	5				2	3	2	86	1	2
CAPE CORMORANT	25	19	23	6	6	26	52	20	16	8	4	1
BANK CORMORANT			2					1	1	1		1
CROWNED CORMORANT		1								2		1
REED CORMORANT		2		1		1	1					
WHITE-BREASTED CORMORANT	1		2			1	3		2			1
HARTLAUB'S GULL	143	28	16	16	15	21	13	4	3	5	23	40
KELP GULL	14	12	29	5	10	8	3	15	27	28	29	36
GREY-HEADED GULL		1	2			1				1		1
SABINE'S GULL												1
SWIFT TERN	39	1	2	1		5			3	1	3	5
COMMON TERN						1	3		7	4	5	2
SANDWICH TERN								2		1		
GREAT WHITE PELICAN	1		2	3	1	1		1				
AFRICAN OYSTERCATCHER	1	1	1	1			1		2	1		1
AFRICAN DARTER		1								1		1
LESSER FLAMINGO						1						1
GREATER FLAMINGO						1						
NORTHERN GIANT PETREL	2									1		
SOUTHERN GIANT PETREL			2									
GREAT WINGED PETREL				1				1				
WHITE-CHINNED PETREL	1	1								1		
BROWN SKUA			1									
PARASITIC JAEGER									1	1		1
LITTLE GREBE					1							
SACRED IBIS						1	3					
BLACK-HEADED HERON										1		1
GREY HERON						1		1		2	1	1
BLACKSMITH LAPWING		1							1			
CROWNED LAPWING				1								
PIED AVOCET								1		1		
WHITE FRONTED PLOVER							1				1	1
TOTAL OTHER SEABIRDS	**233**	**120**	**87**	**35**	**33**	**69**	**82**	**49**	**65**	**146**	**67**	**98**

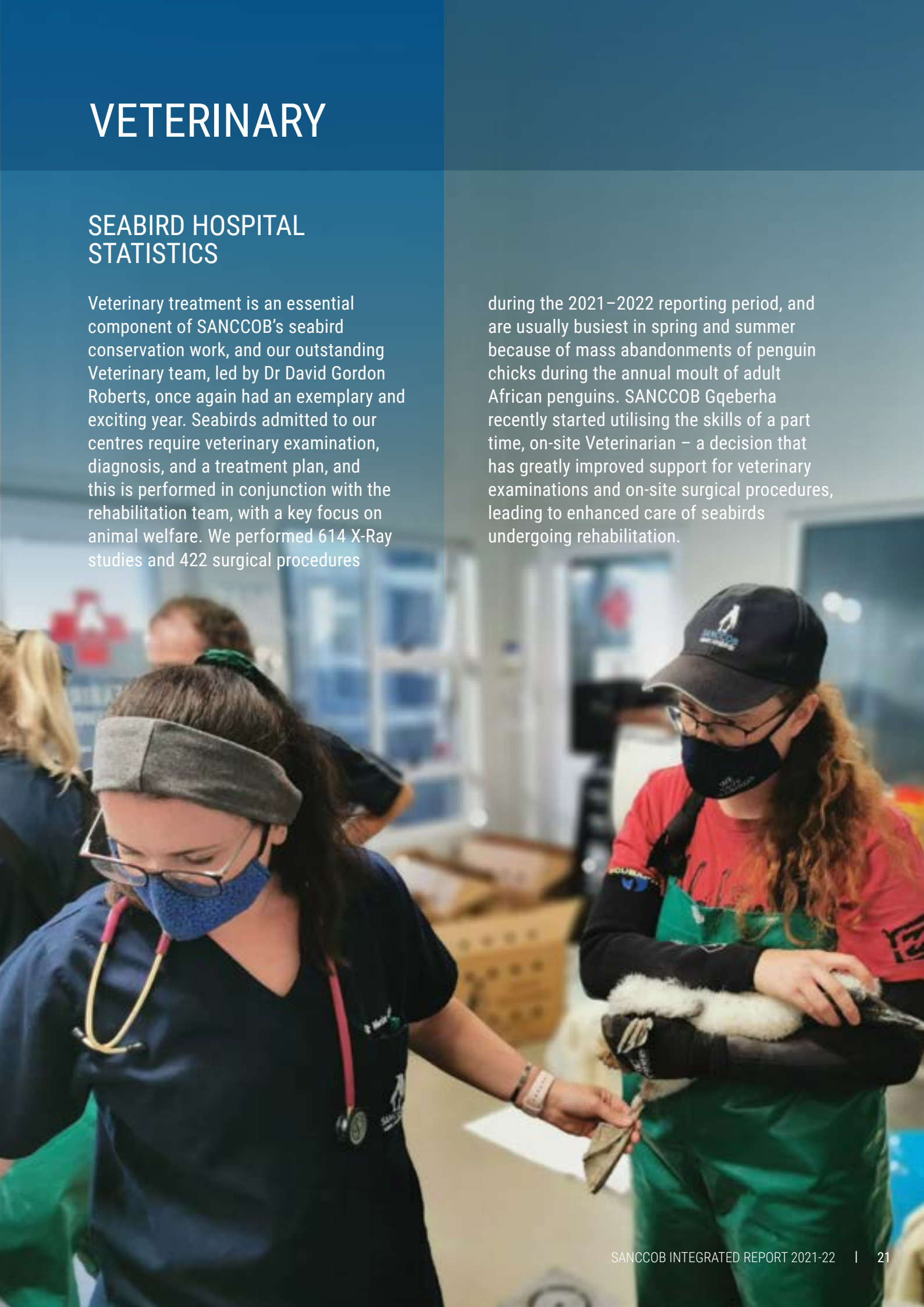
SEABIRD SPECIES ADMITTED TO SANCCOB EASTERN CAPE

	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
AFRICAN PENGUIN	**9**	**13**	**3**	**102**	**113**	**9**	**3**	**18**	**11**	**12**	**14**	**50**
OTHER SEABIRDS												
ROCKHOPPER PENGUIN			1	1								
CAPE GANNET	10	4		1		2	4	5	7	7	7	13
CAPE CORMORANT	1		1	1		2	1	1		4		3
REED CORMORANT							1		2	2	1	
WHITE-BREASTED CORMORANT												1
KELP GULL	3	2	3	1	2	1		8	3	1	4	3
GREY-HEADED GULL						1						
ROSEATE TERN						1						
SWIFT TERN				1		1						1
COMMON TERN									1			1
AFRICAN OYSTERCATCHER				1	1							
LESSER FLAMINGO		1										
SOOTY SHEARWATER											1	
SOUTHERN GIANT PETREL	1											
BROWN SKUA		1										
GREY HERON		1						1	1			
DWARF BITTERN		1										
RUDDY TURNSTONE												1
LITTLE STINT						1						
ANTARCTIC TERN	1											
TOTAL OTHER SEABIRDS	**16**	**10**	**5**	**6**	**3**	**9**	**6**	**15**	**14**	**14**	**13**	**23**

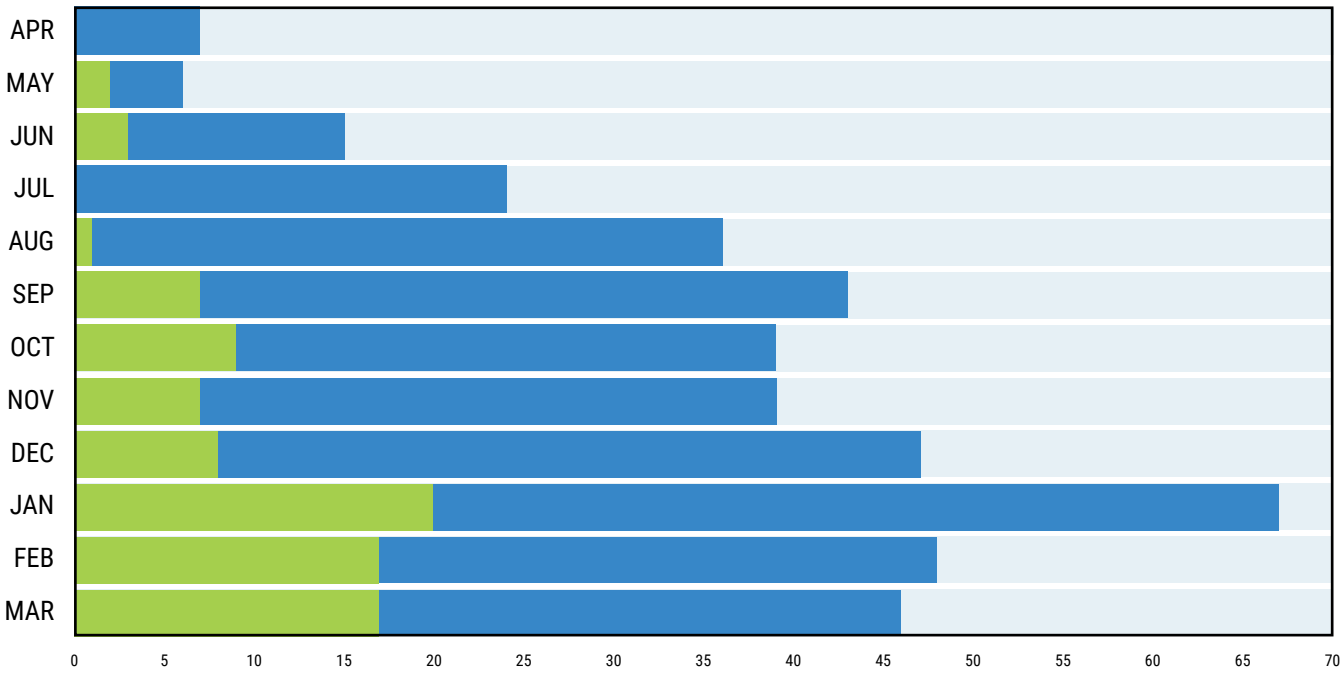
VETERINARY

SEABIRD HOSPITAL STATISTICS

Veterinary treatment is an essential component of SANCCOB's seabird conservation work, and our outstanding Veterinary team, led by Dr David Gordon Roberts, once again had an exemplary and exciting year. Seabirds admitted to our centres require veterinary examination, diagnosis, and a treatment plan, and this is performed in conjunction with the rehabilitation team, with a key focus on animal welfare. We performed 614 X-Ray studies and 422 surgical procedures during the 2021–2022 reporting period, and are usually busiest in spring and summer because of mass abandonments of penguin chicks during the annual moult of adult African penguins. SANCCOB Gqeberha recently started utilising the skills of a part time, on-site Veterinarian – a decision that has greatly improved support for veterinary examinations and on-site surgical procedures, leading to enhanced care of seabirds undergoing rehabilitation.



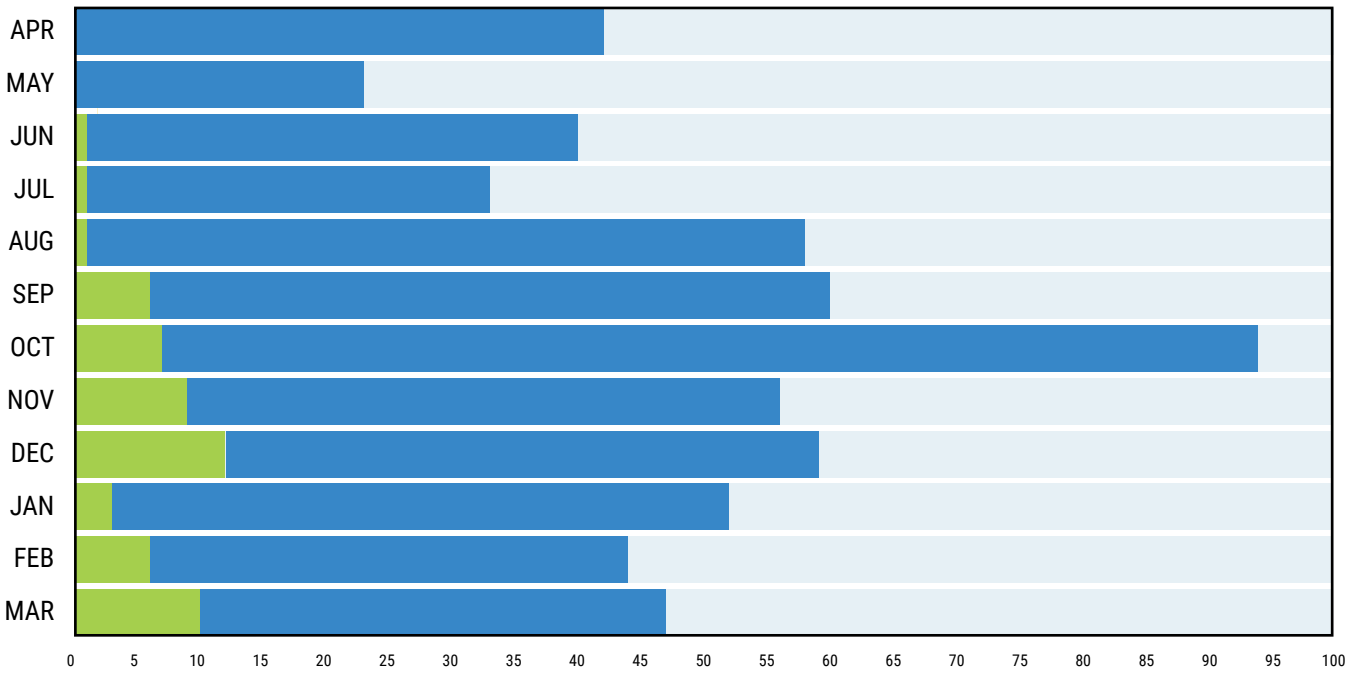
SURGICAL PROCEDURES AT SANCCOB (CAPE TOWN/GQEBERHA)



Cape Town
TOTAL | **AVE. P/MONTH**
326 | **27**

Gqeberha
TOTAL | **AVE. P/MONTH**
96 | **8**

X-RAYS AT SANCCOB (CAPE TOWN/GQEBERHA)



Cape Town
TOTAL | **AVE. P/MONTH**
552 | **46**

Gqeberha
TOTAL | **AVE. P/MONTH**
62 | **5**

SEABIRD VETERINARY TRAINING

We are proud to have hosted 26 participants in our SANCCOB veterinary experience programme, which provides interested students and Veterinarians a bird's eye view of the veterinary work performed at SANCCOB. It is always a pleasure to inspire people to pursue a career in veterinary conservation and to exchange ideas with other Veterinarians. We also provided seabird first aid and stabilisation training for first responders and Penguin and Seabird Rangers, and trained seabird researchers and Veterinarians on the safest ways to handle and collect samples from seabirds.

WILD SEABIRD DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

Disease outbreaks remain a threat to seabird populations. Routine surveillance has proven to be an effective tool to assist colony management, and SANCCOB has a long-standing history of disease and parasite research. The disease surveillance programme conducted by SANCCOB's Research Department between 2019 and 2021 tested carcasses recovered from the wild, and seabirds admitted to SANCCOB, for concerning diseases, which led to the detection of the latest outbreak of Avian Influenza in South African seabirds. This discovery highlights biosecurity measures necessary to decrease the risk of disease transmission at rehabilitation centres and exacerbates our concern regarding the transmission of diseases in the mainland colonies.

AFRICAN PENGUIN HEALTH SURVEY

SANCCOB forms part of a large collaborative study on African penguin health, in association with African-German Partners for Ocean Knowledge, and the MeerWissen initiative funded by the German Government (GIZ), which focuses on Avian Influenza and other diseases, as well as parasites. Our veterinary and rehabilitation staff assisted with fieldwork for the African Penguin Health Survey, which required expeditions to all the African penguin colonies in South Africa, and to Halifax Island in Namibia, to weigh, measure, microchip and collect samples from over 300 African penguins. Data was also collected from more than 200 penguins that were admitted to SANCCOB, and this will be analysed to provide an improved understanding of a large range of health parameters, including body condition, signs of exposure to the Avian Influenza virus, and the presence of blood parasites.

Weighing an African Penguin, Possession Island, April 2022

Collecting feather samples from an African penguin

Taking head measurements of an African penguin

AVIAN INFLUENZA OUTBREAK

The first detection of a positive case of the H5N1 strain of Avian Influenza in a wild bird in South Africa was diagnosed in a Hartlaub's gull at SANCCOB in May 2021, as part of SANCCOB's disease surveillance project. This discovery signalled the start of a devastating outbreak.

Sadly, this highly pathogenic disease had a significant impact on endangered seabirds, and more than 230 African penguins and 24,000 Cape cormorants were reported to have died because of this outbreak, although the actual number of mortalities is likely to be far higher. At the peak of the outbreak, more than 500 affected birds were collected per day, and the population-level effect was of an unprecedented scale, especially in Cape cormorants. Even at conservative estimates, more than 15% of the South African population of Cape cormorants died from Avian Influenza in less than four months, showing that disease can play a significant role in population decline of endangered species. SANCCOB is an important stakeholder in responding to disease outbreaks, by assisting with surveillance and diagnosis, responding to calls from members of the public who have found affected seabirds, advising other stakeholders on outbreak management, assisting with the euthanasia of affected birds, and encouraging open communication between stakeholders. Due to the scale of the outbreak, several governmental and non-governmental organisations worked together to reduce the spread of the disease. SANCCOB increased biosecurity measures at both centres to minimise the risk of transmission to seabirds undergoing treatment, and at the peak of the outbreak, an off-site quarantine facility was established in Cape Town for newly admitted patients. The outbreak coincided with the admission of hundreds of African penguin chicks that had been abandoned due to moulting parents, and patients were only transferred to the SANCCOB seabird hospital once a negative Avian Influenza test result had been obtained.

Rehabilitation volunteers and interns at work in the quarantine facility

TOP 4 SEABIRD FATALITIES DUE TO H5N1 STRAIN OF AVIAN INFLUENZA

CAPE CORMORANT
24,000

COMMON TERN **70**

AFRICAN PENGUIN
230

KELP GULL **80**

New African penguin chick arrival in off-site quarantine

Admitting and collecting samples from African penguin chicks at the off-site temporary quarantine facility

African penguin chicks held in quarantine after Avian Influenza testing

BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS

Several parasites have been recorded in African penguins, with hosts already compromised, such as young chicks. In severe cases, penguins may require a blood transfusion to address anaemia and replenish healthy red blood cells.

Two African penguin chicks were released after receiving successful blood transfusions. AP262 had severe anaemia caused by babesiosis and was the first penguin successfully released from SANCCOB, after undergoing a transfusion of 27 ml of blood from a long-term resident African penguin. AP329 was one of the year's best success stories. Admitted as a tiny 1.1 kg chick rescued from Stony Point, AP329 had severe babesiosis, equally severe anaemia, and a stiff, injured right hock joint. Soon after admission, an IV drip was inserted: a difficult task in such a small, compromised bird, followed by a blood transfusion. AP329's recovery was very slow, requiring physiotherapy, assisted swims and walks with a body harness. AP329 was eventually able to walk independently and was successfully released after 105 days of rehabilitative and veterinary care at SANCCOB. Another was AP740, who was admitted due to severe emaciation and anaemia. This individual weighed 1.95 kg (65% of the weight of a healthy African penguin) when admitted to SANCCOB. Part of his treatment was a blood transfusion, making him the first adult to survive after receiving a blood transfusion at SANCCOB.

RIGHT, FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: AP262 after transfusion; AP329 in a physiotherapy session; AP740 during blood transfusion, and in recovery

FLIPPER INJURY

AP067 was admitted with a serious wound on his flipper, with exposed bone. Flipper wounds often have a poor prognosis for release, especially when bone is exposed, but luckily the flipper joints were not severely affected, and after several surgical procedures to debride the wound and remove dead bone, the flipper healed well and the penguin was successfully released.

NECK WOUND

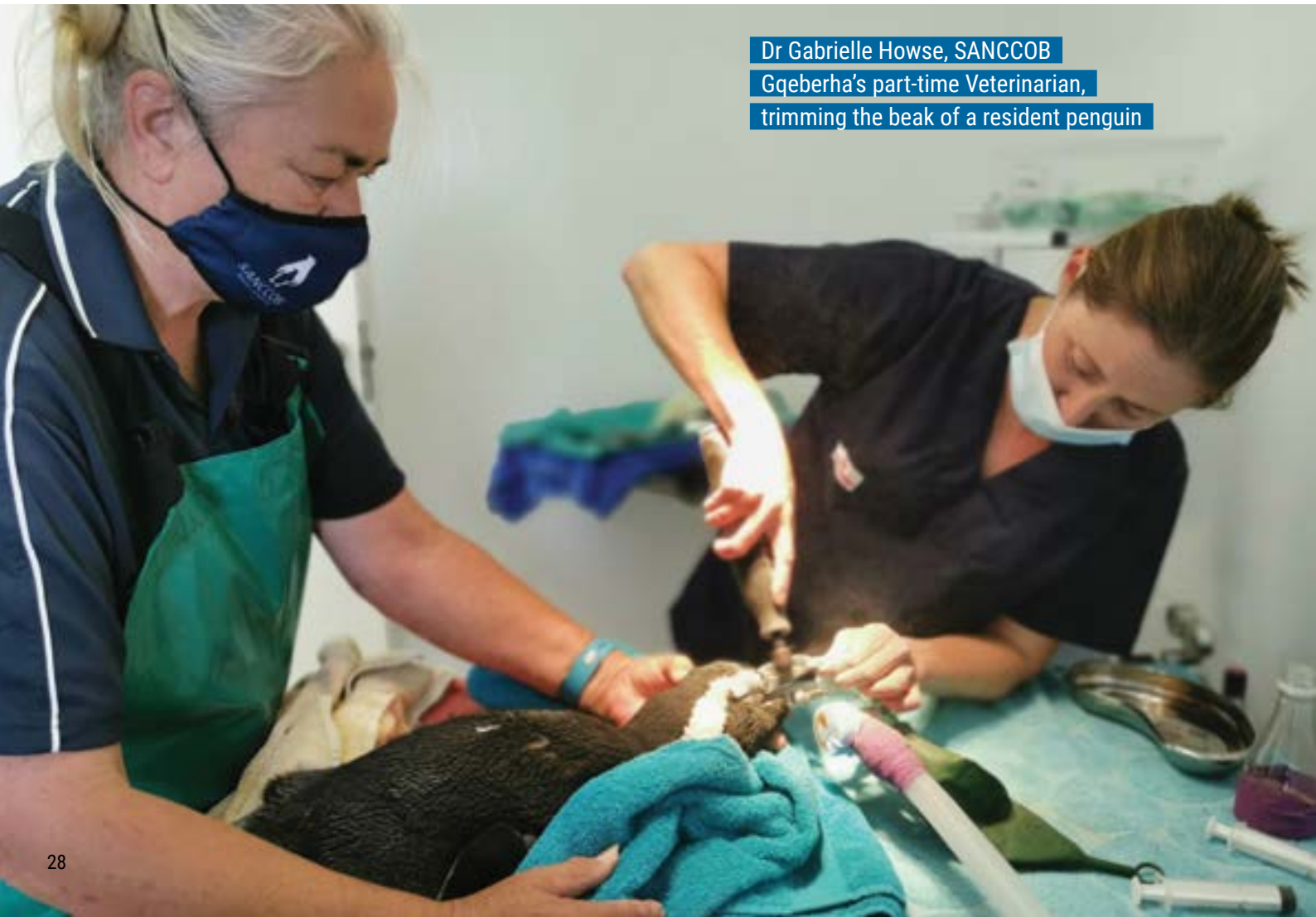
Another success story relates to AP007, which was admitted to SANCCOB Gqeberha on 12 January 2022 from Bird Island, Algoa Bay, with a severe neck injury; most likely due to seal predation, which had become infected. The bird was also underweight, weighing only 2.25 kg, and after four surgical procedures and 99 days of care, AP007 was released back to Bird Island on 21 April 2022, weighing 4.2 kg.

AP067 prepped for surgery

AP067 undergoing surgery to repair flipper wound

AP067 prior to release

AP007 in the rehabilitation pen after multiple surgical procedures



Dr Gabrielle Howse, SANCCOB Gqeberha's part-time Veterinarian, trimming the beak of a resident penguin

RESEARCH

MONITORING PENGUINS IN THE WILD

SANCCOB plays a key role in the monitoring of African penguins in the wild, partnering with Government, managing authorities, academic institutions, and other NGOs. New technologies have led the way to a better understanding of African penguin survival, movement and behaviour at sea, and SANCCOB is currently working with its partners to incorporate remote technologies when monitoring penguins to reduce disturbance in breeding colonies. These tools and techniques will hopefully lead to improved conservation of the species, with data provided to decision makers for beneficial management interventions.

African penguins crossing a transponder reader weighbridge at Stony Point penguin colony

PASSIVE INTEGRATED TRANSPONDERS

The Transponder Project, introduced to mark African penguins permanently using microchips, is coordinated by SANCCOB's Research Department, and was initiated 10 years ago as a national marking system to replace the previously used metal flipper bands. The project ensures that all African penguins released from SANCCOB are equipped with transponders. Several hundred fledglings and adults from wild colonies in South Africa are also marked annually, and more recently, this project has been extended to Namibia. During the past decade, more than 11,000 African penguins have been fitted with transponders. Considering the birds' relatively low chance of survival in the wild, we assume that approximately 3–4% of the wild population can now be recognised individually by their unique transponder identification number. 11 ground readers installed in six of the main colonies have recorded more than 50,000 individual readings per annum. This information allows an assessment of the survival rates of hand-reared and wild chicks, adults that have been rehabilitated at SANCCOB and penguins in the wild, showing the importance of SANCCOB's work for the overall penguin population. Interestingly, we are also starting to see patterns in birds crossing these readers more frequently during the breeding season. We are hopeful that this information will allow us to monitor breeding stages and breeding success, and possibly even replace or reduce regular nest checks, resulting in less disturbance in the colonies, especially in sensitive areas. Data from ground readers can also assist in assessing foraging times, i.e. the time the penguins spend at sea in search of food to raise their chicks and secure their own survival – an important indicator for food availability. Together with BirdLife South Africa, SANCCOB is taking it a step further by incorporating weighing scales into the readers that measure weight differences between birds heading out to sea and returning from sea. Future developments may include camera systems that will provide information on the size of birds. Overcoming these parameters would allow us to obtain an idea of the condition of individual African penguins, colonies, and populations overall.

TRACKING PENGUINS

Another important monitoring tool is the tracking of African penguins using GPS data loggers. The tracking study, conducted by SANCCOB, BirdLife South Africa and SANParks, at the Simon's Town penguin colony, is now in its fourth year. This data shows that all African penguins breeding in Simon's Town have foraged exclusively inside False Bay between 2019 and 2021. Their movements varied both in area and distance travelled according to small scale food availability within the bay and possibly other factors such as boat traffic. During the lockdown in 2020 the birds foraged closer to the western and northern shore of False Bay than they had in other years, this study highlights the importance of False Bay for the African penguin, most likely linked to the fact that no fishing for small pelagic fish species, such as anchovy and sardine, is allowed within the bay. Experimental closures to industrial fishing around some of the other main penguin breeding colonies have also shown benefits to the birds. The Simon's Town penguin colony, the only African penguin colony in South Africa that has been stable in terms of population size over the past decade, despite other threats (road kills, mortality due to land-based predators, and disturbance), highlights the positive effects of small scale fish abundance close to the breeding colony.

Alistair McInnes and Tegan Carpenter-Kling of BirdLife South Africa fit a GPS data device onto a wild African penguin

AFRICAN PENGUIN ACOUSTICS

Several studies have shown that African penguins' communication is important for their survival, both on land and at sea. Unfortunately, anthropogenic noise, such as ship traffic, can negatively affect the foraging behaviour of penguins, and thus their long-term survival. SANCCOB has partnered with several academic institutions, both nationally and internationally, to better understand the importance of vocalisation in African penguins as well as the impacts of underwater noise.

A study led by the University of Turin, Italy, investigates the development of penguin chick calls. The high volume of penguin chicks reared at SANCCOB's Chick Rearing Unit provides a unique opportunity to record everything from pre-hatching calls to calls of chicks of known age over the entire period, to fledging. The results of this study will help to monitor both chick age and condition in the wild, further reducing disturbance. It is hoped that the information can be assessed purely by recording the calls, thus removing the need to handle the chicks. Another study, led by a team of French and Italian scientists in collaboration with SANCCOB, investigates adult penguin calls at the colony. Not only do African penguin calls help identify individual birds, they may also give insights into their body size (the frequencies produced by birds vary according to lung size and capacity), and possibly into their foraging efficiency. Passive Acoustic Monitoring, achieved by placing audio recorders in certain sections of a colony, may be a way to remotely monitor the number of breeding pairs, the duration of foraging trips (as birds call prior to leaving for sea and when returning to the colony) as well as condition. Again, this information is currently often measured by entering the colony. A further acoustic study, in collaboration with BirdLife South Africa, Nelson Mandela University and Universite Paris-Saclay, France, is examining at-sea communication among African penguins and how anthropogenic noise negatively affects their foraging efficiency. The dramatic decline in African penguin numbers at St Croix Island in Algoa Bay may well be due to an increase in vessel traffic and associated underwater noise pollution, which has increased over the past five years due to harbour developments.

EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Many people still think of climate change as a phenomenon that we will only face in the distant future. Perhaps that's partly because climate change projections about rising temperatures and extreme weather events are tied to future dates: 2030, 2050 or 2100. In fact, we have been witnessing the impact of a changing climate for some time, and penguins and other seabirds are showing us first hand what we can expect in the future. An increasingly important monitoring aspect is the effect of climate change on the breeding success of seabirds. Extreme weather events lead to abandonment or breeding failures, and these events are being observed with increasing frequency. In 2021/2022, several storms and heat waves led to the rescue of hundreds of African penguin eggs and chicks from colonies in the Western and Eastern Cape. A severe storm in early 2022 led to the rescue of 80-plus Cape gannet chicks from Lambert's Bay, where areas of the colony were flooded by high swells.

Climate change predictions indicate an increase in extreme weather incidents, so it is vital that we mitigate their damaging effects by developing early warning systems and improving breeding habitats. SANParks and SANCCOB are jointly working on an early warning system for African penguins breeding in the Simon's Town penguin colony that will allow us to assess the risk of extreme weather events and to conduct pre-emptive removals, if necessary. The study includes the assessment of various habitat types (different artificial nests and vegetation types) in terms of temperature exposure, especially during warmer summer months, and how these habitats and nest temperatures influence breeding success. The topic of climate change impacts on African penguins was highlighted in the United Nations International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) WGII Assessment Report (2022) as a case study.

African penguin chick admitted for hand-rearing due to abandonment

A gannet chick displaced by the Lambert's Bay storm in its new surroundings at SANCCOB Cape Town

SANCCOB intern feeding a gannet chick

PUBLICATIONS

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Mdluli A, Barham PJ (2022) Change in moult behaviour of African penguins ***Spheniscus demersus*** on Robben Island. Biodiversity Observations 12: 9-14 DOI: 10.15641/bo.1199

Zeyl JN, Snelling E, Connan M, Basille M, Clay TA, Joo R, Patrick S, Phillips R, Pistorius P, Ryan PG, **Snyman A**, Clusella-Trullas S (2022) Aquatic birds have middle ears adapted to amphibious lifestyles. Scientific Reports 12:5251 https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-09090-3

Snyman A, **Roberts DG**, **Ludynia K** (2022) A four-legged African penguin ***Spheniscus demersus*** chick. Marine Ornithology 50:5-6

Strydom Z, **Waller LJ**, Brown M, Fritz H, Shaw K, Venter JA (2022) Factors that influence Cape fur seal predation on Cape gannets at Lambert's Bay, South Africa. Factors that influence Cape fur seal predation on Cape gannets at Lambert's Bay, South Africa [PeerJ]

Scheun J, Miller RJ, Ganswindt A, **Waller LJ**, Pichegru L, Sherley RB, Maneveldt GM (2021) Urofaecal glucocorticoid metabolite concentrations in African penguins (Spheniscus demersus) chick populations experiencing different levels of human disturbance. Conservation Physiology Urofaecal glucocorticoid metabolite concentrations in African penguin *(Spheniscus demersus)* chick populations experiencing different levels of human disturbance | Conservation Physiology | Oxford Academic (oup.com)

Leith FW, Grigg JL, Barham BJ, Barham PJ, **Ludynia K**, McGeorge C, Mdluli A, Parsons NJ, **Waller LJ**, Sherley RB (2022) Intercolony variation in reproductive skipping in the African penguin. Ecology and Evolution 12:e9255. https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.9255

Pichegru L, Vibert L, Thiebault A, Charrier I, **Stander N**, **Ludynia K**, Lewis M, Carpenter-Kling T, McInnes A (2022) Maritime traffic trends around the southern tip of Africa – Did marine noise pollution contribute to the local penguins' collapse? Science of the Total Environment https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2022.157878

Strydom Z, **Waller LJ**, Brown M, Fritz H, Shaw K, Venter JA (2022) Factors that influence Cape fur seal predation on Cape gannets at Lambert's Bay, South Africa. PeerJ 10:e13416 https://peerj.com/articles/13416/

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND BLOGS

Ludynia K (2021) Helping Hands (Cape cormorant rescue). African BirdLife Magazine May/June 2021

Van Wilgen-Bredenkamp N, **Ludynia K**, Rodgers F, Kock A, Foden W (2021) New nest boxes for African penguins at Boulders, Table Mountain National Park. SANParks Research 2020/2021

Thiebault A, McInnes A, Carpenter-Kling T, **Ludynia K**, Pichegru L, Charrier I (2021) A new project on the at-sea communication of African penguins. SANCOR Newsletter 225

Ludynia K (2021) Update on the cormorant rescue. Promerops 321 November 2021

Ludynia K (2021) The great Cape cormorant rescue. Promerops 320 July 2021

Roberts DG (2021) Intensive Care at SANCCOB – a look behind the scenes. Promerops 319 March 2021

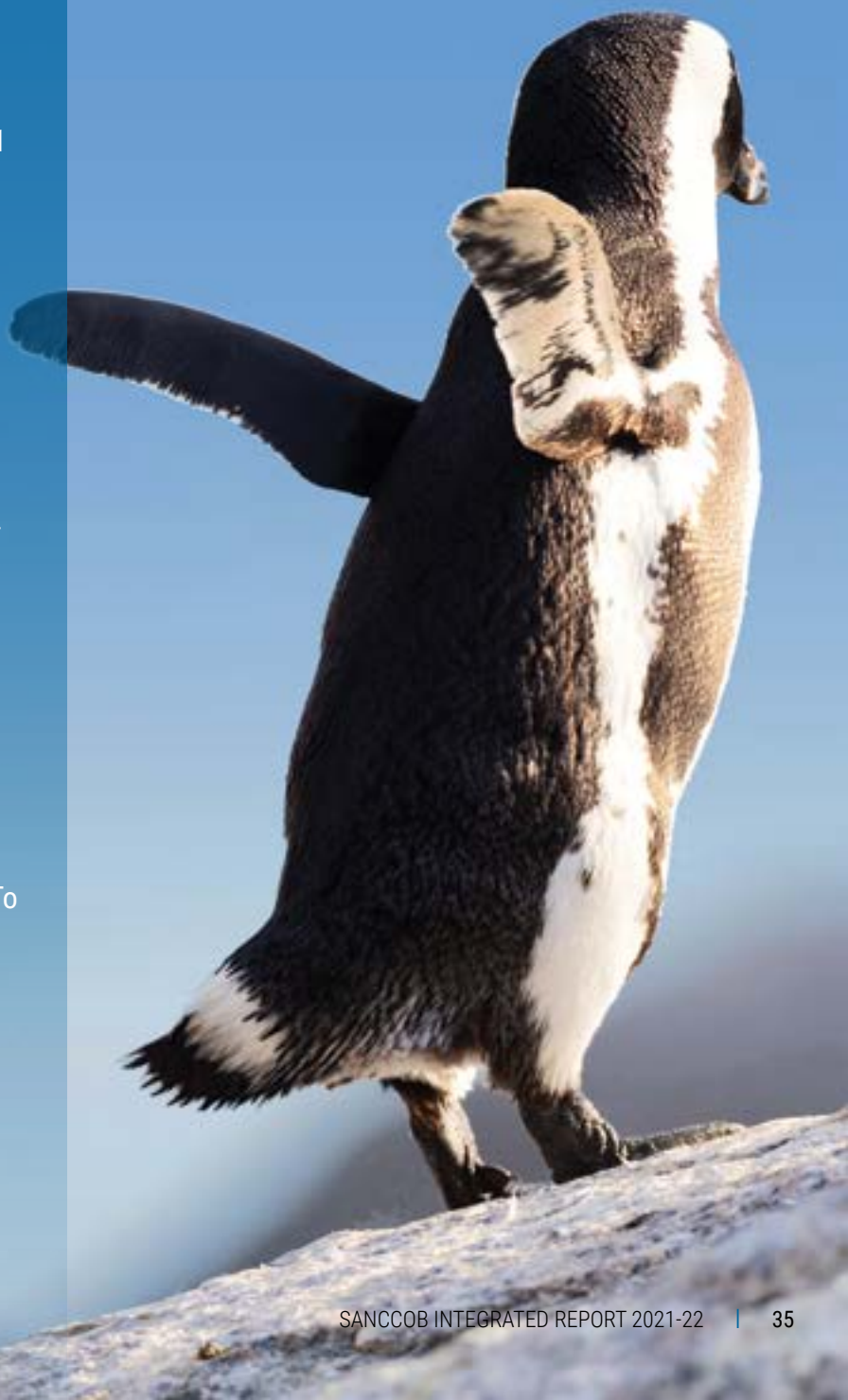
Ludynia K Cape Gannet African BirdLife magazine

PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

South Africa is home to a rich diversity of coastal and seabird species, many of which are endemic to the region and of high conservation value. Yet seabirds face numerous challenges that threaten their survival, from food shortages and habitat destruction to extreme weather events, predation, marine pollution, human disturbance, and disease outbreaks. Over the years, South Africa has seen an increasing number of these threats evolve into disasters that have impacted negatively on seabird populations. In 2021 alone, seabirds were affected by an oil spill, a disease outbreak, and mass chick abandonments driven by food scarcity and/or extreme weather events.

As seabird numbers continue to decline and the frequency of disasters increases, a sobering fact is emerging – without effective mitigation measures, many of these species could soon become extinct.

SANCCOB recognises that a reactive response is insufficient, and that proactive planning and preparation is required to mitigate the effects and impact of disasters. SANCCOB works with Government, industry, NGOs and other organisations to set in motion adequate plans to prepare response strategies that aim to prevent or alleviate future impacts. To this end, in 2021 SANCCOB's preparedness and response work was broadened to include care for victims of disease outbreaks and mass abandonments, alongside the oiled wildlife casualties.



PREPAREDNESS IS KEY

Over the past two years, following a series of potential and actual incidents, SANCCOB has focused on improving its preparedness capabilities. Our wildlife responders continue to build on the training of previous years and test their response capabilities through desktop and in-person deployment exercises. SANCCOB maintains a constant state of readiness, ensuring that all the responders can deploy locally or internationally within 24 hours. All responders must have an up-to-date passport that is valid for a further six or more months, and be vaccinated against potential diseases occurring in different countries. SANCCOB has developed preparedness further by issuing responders with Go-Bags that contain personal protective equipment (PPE), a first aid kit, Covid-19-compliant masks and any additional gear that may be needed.

In 2021, additional oiled wildlife equipment was purchased and stored in a dedicated oiled wildlife response container at SANCCOB Gqeberha. This equipment is checked on a regular basis to ensure that it is ready to use as soon as a spill occurs. The same process is underway for the oiled wildlife container in Cape Town, which is located at the South African operation of Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL) premises. Our oiled wildlife responders also participated in a desktop exercise that tested SANCCOB's internal notification form and the collection of relevant and important incident information.

In 2022, SANCCOB oiled wildlife responders will undergo Incident Command System (ICS) 300 training and Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training. ICS 300 – Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents – is for individuals who require more advanced knowledge and coaching in the application of the Incident Command System. HAZWOPER is a prerequisite for responding to oil spills internationally and involves awareness of working with hazardous and chemical substances. SANCCOB's national oiled wildlife responders will also be participating in a joint government/industry in-person deployment exercise in 2022 to test the response capabilities of all response organisations in a 'simulated' oil spill.

Oiled seabirds found on Bird Island

OIL SPILLS

CHRONIC OIL POLLUTION – SOURCE UNKNOWN

In July/August 2021, SANCCOB received several reports of oil-affected seabirds along the Eastern Cape and Southern Cape coast. The South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) issued a navigation warning to all ships in transit along the South Coast to be on the lookout for oil, and report any sightings to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC). SANParks and Rapid Response vessels conducted a patrol around Algoa Bay, but found no oil. SANCCOB issued an urgent request on all social media platforms for members of the public to report any oil-affected seabirds.

Unfortunately, South Africa's lack of adequate surveillance resources for oil pollution is a serious concern and serves as a major limitation to the country's overall response capabilities, particularly for wildlife. It is often difficult to ascertain from where the oil pollution originated, especially along the South African coastline, which is one of the busiest in the world. With so many vessels transiting through South African waters, oil spills are an ongoing concern.

CABLE RESTORER, SIMON'S TOWN

SANCCOB responded to a potential oil spill close to the Simon's Town seabird colony, on Monday 11 October 2021, when the HMS Cable Restorer broke in two while moored at the False Bay Yacht Club in Simon's Town. The 77-year-old vessel was in the process of being broken up for scrap metal when its structure collapsed. It appeared that oil was leaking from the Cable Restorer, and SANCCOB deployed a team of responders to assess the situation. It emerged that red tide had occurred and entered the harbour, its algal blooms easily mistaken for what appeared to be oil. The South African Navy, which was overseeing the salvage operation, had responded by deploying a containment boom around the vessel, thereby preventing any "oil" from escaping into the surrounding areas. The team reported that the situation was under control and that the risk of oil pollution was minimal. The incident was an opportunity to test our preparedness and response capabilities. SANCCOB responded alongside all the relevant stakeholders, including DFFE, City of Cape Town and SANParks.

MV SOLIN – ANOTHER SHIP-TO-SHIP BUNKERING OIL SPILL

A third ship-to-ship bunker-related oil spill occurred on 17 November 2021, when heavy fuel oil overflowed from the receiving fuel tank of the *MV Solin* during routine bunkering operations in Algoa Bay. According to SAMSA, appoximately 80 litres of heavy fuel oil spilled into the ocean, and oil spill booms were deployed immediately, and the clean-up operators activated. SANCCOB was activated as part of the initial response and a team deployed from Cape Town to assist with preparations at the Gqeberha centre to receive oiled birds. Fortunately, the number of birds oiled was low, just three Cape gannets and one African penguin (the latter likely due to the fact that the penguins were undergoing their annual moult and, being unable to swim, remained in their colonies). The timing was fortunate, however, it was another reminder that offshore fuel transfers are incredibly risky and pose a serious threat to nearby breeding colonies of endangered species.

BEYOND BORDERS – CHRISTMAS EVE DIESEL SPILL

SANCCOB received an informal report of an oil spill occurring off the southern border of the Skeleton Coast National Park, along the shoreline of northwest Namibia, on 24 December 2021. The spill occurred during a planned ship demolition. Unfortunately, wildlife were affected and 60-plus oiled Cape cormorants were observed. Of the 60, only six were eventually rescued. Ocean Conservation Namibia admitted the birds for washing, and sadly, only one cormorant survived, which is, unfortunately, a probable outcome when dealing with diesel contamination because diesel burns the skin of seabirds and immediate washing is necessary.

This incident highlighted major gaps in Namibia's response capabilities, and after consulting with the company responsible for the Enviromental Impact Assessment (EIA), it was confirmed that there was no contingency plan in the Environmental Management Plan to deal with oil-affected wildlife. All of the above are critical elements of preparedness, as an oil spill can happen at any time, day or night. Relevant planning needs to take place as soon as possible to ensure that appropriate response strategies are in place and can be activated 24/7.

Oiled cormorants were cared for by Ocean Conservation Namibia in December 2021

GLOBAL OILED WILDLIFE RESPONSE SERVICE (GOWRS)

The idea of a global response system to deal with wildlife affected by oil spills was first proposed nearly 10 years ago at the 2012 Interspill Conference. Since then, this idea evolved into an industry-funded project, and in 2015 the Global Oiled Wildlife Response Service (GOWRS) was formally initiated. GOWRS aims to provide a Tier 3 (international) response system for oiled wildlife that can be accessed by the oil industry in the event of an oil spill requiring a Tier 3 wildlife response. SANCCOB is one of 10 leading oiled wildlife organisations involved in the GOWRS project, which has compiled a range of preparedness and readiness guidance documents that were published through IPIECA, the global oil and gas industry association that promotes good practice for environmental and social issues.

In 2021, Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL) listed GOWRS as a complementary service and then approved its operation as a live service in 2022. The service involves a guaranteed four-person Tier 3 wildlife assessment team consisting of wildlife operations/ planning specialist, field/capture specialist, rehabilitation/facility specialist, and incident-specific specialist. This significant milestone represented many years of behind-the-scenes hard work.

Even though in-person engagements were not possible, the group actively engaged in monthly meetings and even participated in virtual exercises. In November 2021, as part of OSRL's virtual Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), GOWRS staged a 4-person Assessment Team, which involved mock scenarios, for Angola, Guyana, Malaysia and Kazakhstan. The exercise was to give OSRL members an idea of what the GOWRS team is able to deliver in a Tier 3 oil spill. SANCCOB represented the Field Assessment segment for Angola, expressing the biodiversity sensitivities along the coastline and potential impacts during an oil spill incident. The exercise was well received and sparked conversations about additional work that was needed for crucial species in priority countries.

OFFSHORE OPERATORS STAKEHOLDERS FORUM (FORMERLY BUNKERING STAKEHOLDER FORUM)

Ship-to-ship (STS) bunkering poses several environmental challenges other than the risk of oil pollution, such as the noise pollution associated with increased vessel traffic. These risks need to receive adequate consideration in the decision-making process regarding bunkering operations to ensure that development is ecologically sustainable. Since the start of STS bunkering in Algoa Bay, four bunkering-related oil spills have occurred, affecting three of the four endangered seabird species in the bay. SANCCOB and other environmental organisations have objected to ship-to-ship bunkering since its inception, and continue to raise their concerns that this high-risk commercial business is allowed to continue near foraging and breeding grounds of endangered species.

In August 2019, following the second oil spill, a moratorium was placed on issuing of new bunkering licences pending the finalisation of a Holding Capacity and Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) study. The Anchorage Holding Capacity Study (commissioned by SAMSA) was completed in 2020; the ERA (to be commissioned by Transnet National Port Authorities) has yet to commence. Despite this, in February 2022, SAMSA issued a press release announcing the lifting of the moratorium, effective 1 April 2022. This announcement was a shock to the Bunkering Environmental Working Group given the agreement that the moratorium remains until both studies are complete.

Failed direct engagements resulted in SANCCOB launching a petition calling for the moratorium to be reinstated, and to date, no clarity has been provided regarding the rationale for the decision to lift it. Socioeconomics was cited as the key reason, yet there is little quantifiable evidence to support this claim.

At a subsequent meeting in March 2022, SAMSA announced that, after joint engagement with other management authorities, a decision had been made to reinstate the moratorium on issuing new ship-to-ship bunkering for the entire country until 1 September 2022. There was one exception to this decision and that was for Algoa Bay. The ban on issuing of new STS licences would remain in place until the ERA has been completed. SANCCOB is concerned that, should the ERA not be completed by the required deadline, the moratorium will be lifted for a second time. SANCCOB will therefore continue to work closely with Government and industry to ensure that plans and preparations are in place to mitigate any potential impacts in the future if the ban is lifted.

PREPAREDNESS MEASURES FOR MASS ABANDONMENT AND OILING INCIDENTS

Climate change, lack of food, unpredictable weather patterns and habitat degradation all contribute to the abandonment of eggs or chicks by adult seabirds. In recent years, the frequency of seabird egg and chick abandonment incidents has increased, with conservation authorities assessing the appropriate time to intervene by transferring the eggs and chicks to SANCCOB to be artificially hand-reared.

Similarly to oiled wildlife preparedness, SANCCOB is working with conservation authorities to ensure that abandoned chicks are removed as quickly as possible to maximise their chance of survival. SANCCOB is developing internal contingency plans to ensure that we are able to respond timeously and effectively to mass abandonment incidents, and has provided training in this regard.

Personnel of conservation management authorities received bird handling training

Namibian First Responders trained to wash oiled birds, demonstrated with a taxidermy

GOVERNMENT LIAISON

AFRICAN PENGUIN BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The first Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) for the African penguin was gazetted by the South African government in 2013. Its primary goal was to halt the decline of the country's African penguin population within two years of its implementation. Despite the successful fulfilment of many of the actions listed, this goal was not attained, and the population of African penguins in South Africa continued to decline. The plan was revised and identified actions were set up to operate over a second five-year period, from mid-2022 to 2026.

SANCCOB has played and continues to play an important function in the drafting and implementation of this policy document. The main reason for the ongoing decline of African penguins in South Africa has been linked to a scarcity of prey, which has led to the mortality of adult birds and their chicks. For the second AP-BMP to succeed, it is crucial that this matter is effectively addressed. For that, fishing of penguins' main prey (sardine and anchovy) should be precluded around all prioritised colonies, and seasonally at feeding grounds while the birds are fattening before and after a moult. In addition, colonies along the south coast should be protected and, if shown to be safe and viable, bolstered through the release of hand-reared abandoned chicks and potentially captive-bred penguins.

The risk of oil spills must be strictly minimised through effective disaster preparedness by government and industry. Given the current reduced number of African penguins, colony-specific interventions are crucial to provide the utmost protection of the species.

SEABIRD TASK TEAM

Implemented by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, the Seabird Task Team is a scientific forum comprising seabird scientists charged with advising on scientific matters relating to seabirds. During the reporting period, work focused largely on food availability and island closures around key seabird colonies in South Africa.

UNION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN)

SANCCOB continues its active membership on the National Committee of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). African penguins have been identified by the IUCN Penguin Specialist Group (PSG) as one of three species (of the global 18 species) of penguin that require urgent conservation intervention. The African penguin is of critical conservation concern, with functional extinction predicted along the west coast of South Africa if current trends continue. The IUCN forum provides a broader platform for SANCCOB and other member organisations to ascertain key strategies for species conservation in South Africa. Through the PSG, SANCCOB has highlighted the most significant threat – lack of food – along with issues such as increased pollution incidents linked to offshore fuel bunkering.

NAMIBIA SEABIRD CONSERVATION – ESTABLISHING THE NAMIBIAN FOUNDATION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF SEABIRDS (NAMCOB)

Namibia currently holds approximately 4,000 breeding pairs of African penguins that, along with other threatened seabirds, traverse the entire Namibian coastline. Plans for coastal bird conservation are progressing, despite being slowed down by the Covid-19 pandemic, and we were able to successfully complete phase 1 of the project, which focused on improved preparedness in the event of an oil spill or other emergency situation.

While the seabirds traverse the entire coastline, their breeding islands are concentrated in the southern part of the country, so the towns of Lüderitz and Oranjemund were identified as initial sites in which to store important response equipment that can be accessed quickly when needed.

Through funding from the Debmarine-Namdeb Foundation, a corporate social investment vehicle for Debmarine Namibia and Namdeb Diamond Corporation, the Seabird Conservation Project gained impetus when SANCCOB's technical expertise was utilised to identify critical equipment in these two strategic locations.

In 2021, SANCCOB provided training to Namibian nationals on first response and oiled wildlife response. Trainees consisted of personnel from the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) and the University of Namibia (UNAM). SANCCOB will continue to train identified responders throughout 2022, which will build the necessary in-country capability.

In the reporting period, SANCCOB also drafted a National Oiled Wildlife Contingency Plan for Namibia, which will be integrated into the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan. This is the first time the country has adopted preparedness measures that encompass its most vulnerable seabird species during an oil pollution incident.

The initial aim was to address the lack of preparedness in Namibia and the threat posed to endangered seabirds by an oil pollution incident. However, the project has evolved into a broader conservation initiative with the establishment of the dedicated non-profit Namibian Foundation for the Conservation of Seabirds (NAMCOB). Project partners are SANCCOB, Debmarine-Namdeb Foundation, Namibia Nature Foundation, Namibia Chamber of Environment, African Penguin Conservation Project, Dr Jessica Kemper and The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore. A Constitution has been adopted to conserve seabirds on the Namibian coast and in its marine exclusive economic zone, with emphasis on the most threatened species and improved protection for the Namibian Islands Marine Protected Area (NIMPA).

NAMCOB project partners are currently working on a funding model to create job opportunities for Namibians and to empower the project to deal with future incidents. It is envisaged that similar marine projects in South Africa that have shown positive effects on local seabirds can be introduced to our neighbouring country. A holistic approach to African penguin conservation across the entire breeding range will increase our chances of saving the species from further decline.

ADVOCACY

The African penguin is an endangered species in crisis. Population numbers are at an all-time low of approximately 10,000 breeding pairs in South Africa, which represents a population loss of greater than 95%. In the past five years, the population in the Eastern Cape has declined by 80%.

The reasons? One of the main threats facing this species is the reduced availability of food through climate change-related issues, fish stock collapses, and competition with commercial fisheries. The African penguin is not alone: the Cape gannet and Cape cormorant also depend on small pelagic fish, and are also classified as endangered with declining trends.

Given the enormous concerns of securing sufficient food for endangered seabirds, a significant amount of work has been carried out by SANCCOB and our conservation partners to reduce resource competition. The Minister of DFFE has set in motion several processes in view of the heavily contested results that emerged from the Island Closure Experiment that has been running for the past 13 years (during which Robben and Dassen islands were alternately opened and closed to fishing, as were Bird Island and St Croix Island, with closures being at a 20 km radius). Seabird biologists are firmly of the science-backed opinion that closures play a significant role in arresting the current population decline and contributing to subsequent population growth. However, their findings are contested by the fishing industry, the fisheries department within the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), and fisheries modellers employed by the DFFE.

In 2022, the Minister of DFFE appointed the Consultative Advisory Committee under the Marine Living Resource Act to propose recommendations. SANParks and CapeNature formed part of this committee, along with SANCCOB, BirdLife South Africa, World Wildlife Fund South Africa (WWF-SA) and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT). The small pelagic fishing industry, the fisheries department and their scientific advisors continue to refute that restricting fishing pressure within the foraging range of breeding African penguins will benefit the species. Their objections are at variance with evidence in peer-reviewed published papers that an absence of fishing pressure does indeed benefit the species, and documents by several Working Groups that request urgent interventions.

EDUCATION, VOLUNTEERS & INTERNSHIPS

SCHOOL GROUPS, ONLINE LESSONS AND CENTRE VISITORS

Through the provision of lessons that are aligned with SANCCOB's conservation strategy, SANCCOB strives to inspire conservation-minded action and encourage sustainable behavioural change in learners. Our lessons aim to create awareness and compassion for African penguins, threatened seabird species and the marine environment. Many learners have their first encounter with conservation and marine wildlife via SANCCOB's educational lessons, hence we awaken an eagerness to act and join the plight of seabirds, by showing each learner how their actions can have a positive impact on the environment.

SANCCOB's education teams were very excited to resume learner lessons after the long hiatus caused by Covid-19 restrictions. The hosting of school groups and holiday clubs is a vital component of our goal to spread awareness of the challenges facing marine conservation and provides a wonderful platform from which to educate the next generation about all aspects of seabird conservation. Even though many school and group bookings had to be cancelled or rescheduled throughout the year due to lockdown restrictions, the education teams hosted a total of 66 school groups, comprising a total of 2,499 learners during the review period. Lessons were adapted to ensure that Covid-19 protocols were adhered to. Our efforts were well received by local schools, and several schools in the Western Cape "adopted" penguins as class projects, whereby learners raised funds to support the rehabilitative care of several African penguins.

During the period under review, the Cape Town and Gqeberha centres saw 8,602 visitors. The tours, which inform a wide range of SANCCOB's activities, vary in duration from 45 minutes to 2.5 hours. The positive feedback from visitors make us proud of our success in providing an enjoyable, knowledge-filled tour.

The Gqeberha education team joined forces with the Sustainable Seas Trust (SST) to host a holiday club for children in April 2021. The event was a great success, with children joining from all over the Eastern Cape, including some from the Eastern Province Child and Youth Care Centre. A range of themed activities included 'Trash Bash!', 'Our Feathered Fish Finders', 'Sandy Beaches', and 'Seashore Searches'. Both the SANCCOB and SST teams, and the children, enjoyed themselves, and the collaboration was a great success. We look forward to partnering with SST in future for additional environmental education collaborations.

The Gqeberha 'Little Blues' (aged 7–11) and 'Penguin Protectors' (aged 12–17) clubs met regularly during the year in review, and members participated in activities that taught them about seabirds and marine conservation.

The Cape Town education team were excited to expand the online lesson platform during 2021 to include not only learners, but also their extended families. The lessons were adapted to cater for foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase learners, and each included a virtual tour of the Cape Town centre, a 25-minute seabird conservation lesson, and an activity pack. During this period, SANCCOB hosted 14 groups from all over the world, including South Africa, Egypt, USA, Bulgaria, and Austria.

Interactive educational lessons with learners in the Western and Eastern Cape

HOLDER FAMILY AND REPRESENTATIVES PROJECT

SANCCOB was the grateful recipient of funding from the Holder family and representatives to provide interactive environmental education lessons to 180 Grade 3 learners from six under-resourced schools in vulnerable communities in the Eastern and Western Cape.

The project focused on changing the behaviour of learners by creating awareness and compassion for seabirds, igniting an interest in the conservation of marine biodiversity, and providing training and resources for their educators.

The lessons occurred during the third and fourth quarters of the year, and learners received two informative and interactive lessons at their schools. The schools' educators were provided with educational resource packs to enable them to continue environmental education lessons at their schools - hence furthering SANCCOB's environmental education reach. Participating learners were also provided with resource packs containing exciting and educational materials to encourage further conservation activities and awareness, and each school received a penguin adoption certificate in honour of their participation in the programme, which provided learners with a tangible acknowledgment of how their actions can impact the life of an African penguin.

Education intern Simbonile delivers educators' resource packs to Heatherdale Primary school

DE BEERS MARINE PROJECT

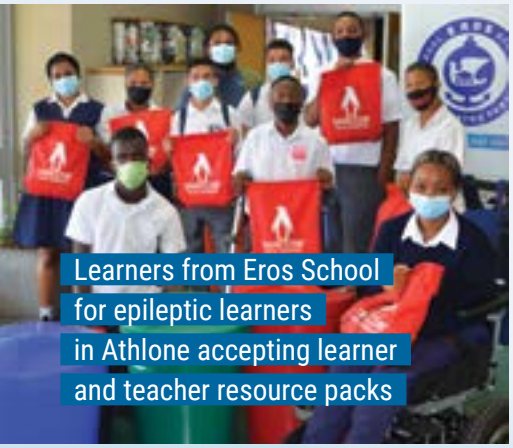
In Cape Town, funding received from De Beers Marine South Africa enabled SANCCOB to engage with 111 learners from Monte Vista Primary School for three days of interactive environmental education lessons. The lessons concentrated on seabird conservation and included several activities that highlighted the plight of seabirds in the wild. Learners were encouraged to upcycle by utilising recycled items they had collected to create artwork in the form of seabird mosaics. Each participating learner received a resource pack of educational materials, and educators were provided with resource packs to enable them to replicate the lessons with the rest of the school. Monte Vista Primary was also provided two framed penguin adoptions in honour of their participation in the programme, aptly named Monty and Visto!

In Gqeberha, 23 learners from the Eastern Province Child and Youth Care Centre and 14 from Vistarus Mission Station were reached. The learners were very grateful for the resources, and thoroughly enjoyed the lessons and activities. 27 additional children were engaged via SANCCOB Gqeberha's holiday club.

RAND MERCHANT BANK PROJECT

In 2021, SANCCOB hosted 335 learners from seven Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) schools in the Western Cape, thereby entering the final year of the three-year project funded by Rand Merchant Bank. The project introduces learners to SANCCOB, the birds we treat and what they can do to help. The lessons are interactive and tailored to accommodate the children's mental and physical abilities.

Learners participated in a three-part project over the course of the year, and each school received a substantial resource pack containing books, posters, stationery and recycling resources to encourage further conservation lessons. The learners were excited to receive their own resource packs, which included informative materials.



Learners from Eros School for epileptic learners in Athlone accepting learner and teacher resource packs

Learners from Blouvlei LSEN school testing their knowledge in the recycling game

Educator, Alex Rogers, explains the importance of African penguin feathers to an APAD visitor

AFRICAN PENGUIN AWARENESS DAY (APAD)

Following the successful virtual African Penguin Awareness Day festival (known as APAD) last year, the team opted to broaden the event by including an open-day experience for visitors, with half-priced tours, thereby expanding APAD to an African Penguin Awareness Week. This included filming of the African penguin release at Seaforth Beach, and engagements with the various exhibitors at the event. A digital recording of the event was shared with the participating LSEN schools, in terms of the Rand Merchant Bank education project, and a strong media awareness campaign focused on African penguin facts and the status of the species. In addition, discounted tours were offered on 8 and 9 October 2021, which resulted in 114 visitors to the Cape Town centre.

Members from each SANCCOB department, ranging from seabird rehabilitation, research, education and veterinary science, as well as Seabird Rangers from the City of Cape Town and representatives from CapeNature, set up exhibition tables on both days. Here, visitors were provided an opportunity to meet each organisation's representatives and obtain further information about the vital work they carry out. The event was successful, and we extend our gratitude to our conservation partners, staff and volunteers who assisted during the festival.

SANCCOB Gqeberha celebrated African Penguin Awareness Day with an early morning sunrise walk from the centre to the nearby lighthouse, where individuals attending braved strong winds to support African penguin conservation. After the walk, guests visited the centre and viewed the African penguins in SANCCOB's care being fed, which was enjoyed by all.

PENGUIN PALOOZA

SANCCOB and CapeNature celebrated the annual Penguin Palooza at the Stony Point penguin colony, with the release of 37 rehabilitated African penguins and interviews with key speakers, including Ziyaad Erasmus (CapeNature Conservation Officer), Natalie Maskell (SANCCOB CEO), Edith Henn (CapeNature Manager: Stakeholder Engagement and Access), and SANCCOB Leiden Conservation Fellow, Dr Lauren Waller. The video premiere was shared on SANCCOB and CapeNature's social media platforms on Saturday 4 December 2021. To add to the festivities, a competition was held via social media, whereby participants were requested to guess the number of African penguins released in the video, with the winner being awarded a weekend stay at CapeNature's Goukamma Nature Reserve.

COLLABORATIONS AND BEACH CLEAN-UPS

On 23 October 2021, and in collaboration with SANParks Table Mountain National Parks, SANCCOB Cape Town's education team initiated a new programme called, 'Careers in Conservation', at Boulders Beach in Simon's Town. Here, the education team provided aspiring young conservationists, consisting of high school learners and veterinary students, with valuable insights into various tertiary education institutions and the best education options to begin a career in conservation. As part of the lesson programme, students received a guided tour of the colony, presentations on a variety of careers in conservation, and ended the day by participating in a Ranger patrol and beach clean-up.

Learners from the American International School of Cape Town creating seabird mosaics from waste collected at Robben Island

In another collaboration with SANParks West Coast, SANCCOB's education team hosted an educational exhibition at the Peperbay slipway as part of SANParks' West Coast National Parks' Marine Week exhibition. Here, learners from local schools were invited to attend and learn about SANCCOB and marine conservation.

The Cape Town education team collaborated with Robben Island Museum to arrange a programme for the International American School of Cape Town. The lesson covered the recycling of waste, and learners were able to put the theory into practice by up-cycling waste that was collected on the island. In a further collaboration with Robben Island Museum, 15 SANCCOB staff, volunteers and interns were deployed to complete a beach clean-up on 14 July 2021. This exciting event was enjoyed by all, and serves as a way to cement SANCCOB's and Robben Island Museum's objective of keeping our beaches clean.

VOLUNTEERS

SANCCOB has received tremendous support from volunteers throughout the years, and the trend continued into 2022, when numbers of dedicated individuals signed up to participate in both local and international volunteer programmes. SANCCOB would not be able to achieve its objectives without the unwavering support of its volunteers, who become an extension of the staff and play an integral part in the daily running of the Cape Town and Gqeberha centres. Not only do they assist in hands-on work with the seabirds, but also with other functions at the centres, such as education, research, marketing and administration.

The Covid-19 outbreak and global lockdown regulations impacted heavily on SANCCOB's volunteer programme and capacity with significantly fewer international volunteer registrations. As Covid-19 variants emerged around the world and travel restrictions were extended, people were both unable and understandably reluctant to volunteer.

Despite this, the international volunteer programme hosted 21 international volunteers from six different countries, who visited the Cape Town centre for six weeks. A further six prospective volunteers from three countries were forced to cancel their applications due to Covid-19-related issues.

To ensure we maintained our exceptional standard of care of seabirds admitted during this time, we focused our efforts on recruiting new local volunteers. The local volunteers rallied, and we were privileged to acquire support, with some volunteers committing to six consecutive weeks. Others came in to assist whenever available, and we continue to receive support from our longer-term regular locals, and their help has been invaluable.

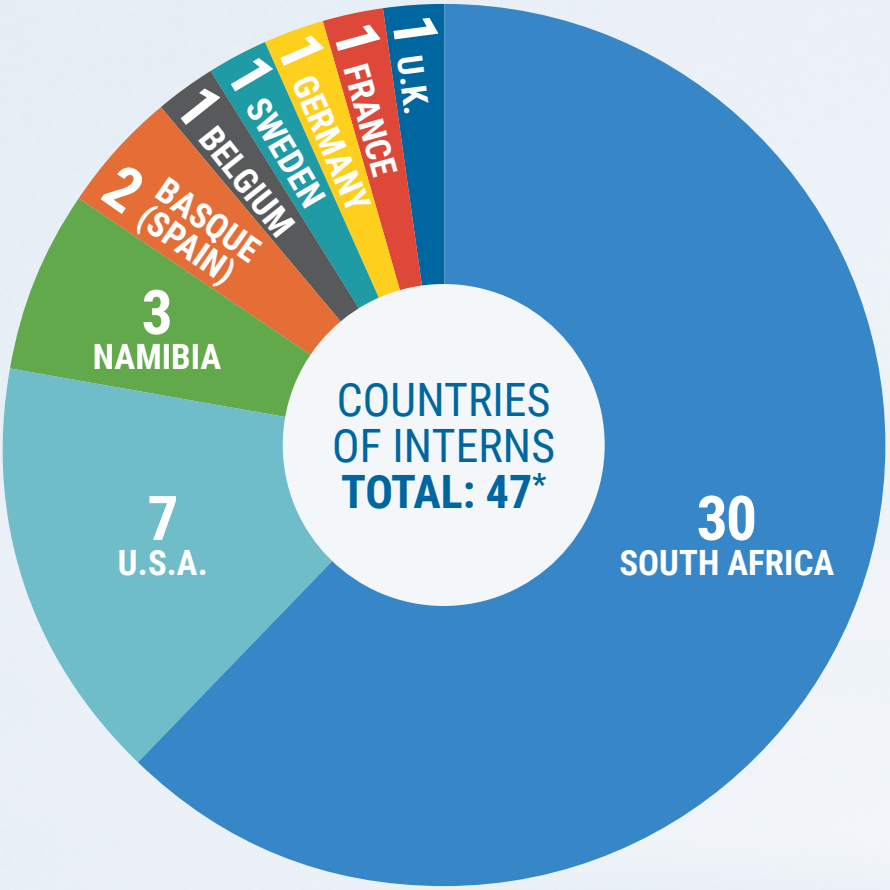
*Excluding cancellations

INTERNSHIPS

SANCCOB's Internship Programme continued to receive support over the past year. Interns join our team through SANCCOB's internal internship programme, and also via external programmes. This year, restrictions on travel and the closure of South African borders resulted in hosting more South African interns than international interns. SANCCOB welcomed two interns from the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) – Human Sciences Research Council: Megan Vokes and Yandisa Cwecwe. Both interns are fully funded by the DSI (previously known as the National Research Foundation, an organisation with which SANCCOB has a long-standing relationship). Megan works as a seabird rehabilitation intern and Yandisa has joined the research department and also spends one to two days a week in the Cape Town centre's rehabilitation pens to gain hands-on seabird rehabilitation training. The programme aims to offer graduates employment opportunities within their fields of study.

In March 2021, we also accepted two interns from the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA), Simbonile Mdunyelwa and Sello Maluleka, who signed up for a one-year paid stewardship. Both Simbonile and Sello joined the education department and also opted to spend a few days per month acquiring seabird rehabilitation skills, by working directly with the seabirds in rehabilitative care. Unfotunately, Sello was unable to complete his internship; but Simbonile's internship continued, and included further training to monitor local beaches for distressed seabirds during the busy holiday seasons and provide the public with valuable information regarding marine conservation. WESSA stewards are provided with opportunities to develop their skills within the wildlife and environmental sectors, and participate in community outreach programmes. SANCCOB was fortunate to be able to extend Simbonile's one-year stewardship programme due to funding received from an existing donor, and we are pleased to note that Simbonile was offered a permanent employment opportunity at SANCCOB during the 2022-2023 reporting period, as SANCCOB Gqeberha's Education Supervisor, where he is now.

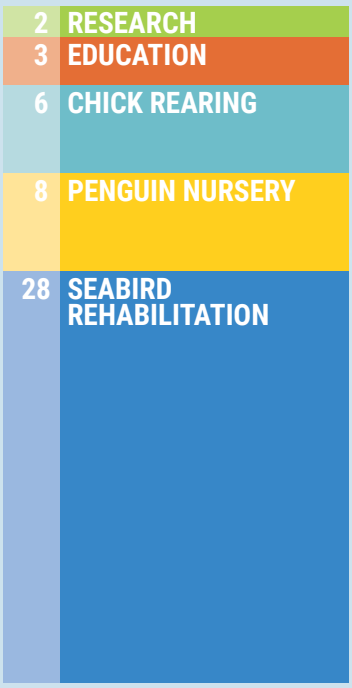
The year in review is the second in which SANCCOB has benefited from funded FirstRand Interns, and we were excited to host four one-year interns during the year under review: Quraesha Shaik, Savira Marriday and Tiffany Johnson joined the team as seabird rehabilitation interns and Aaliya (Riley) Kadamen joined the education department, and also opted to enhance her skills in terms of seabird rehabilitation, by spending some time with the rehabilitation team. FirstRand focuses on offering work experience to individuals who have never been employed, have not yet studied, and who come from vulnerable backgrounds, to provide them with exposure to a working environment that offers them skills development opportunities and knowledge to increase their chances of employment.



Global Training is an international organisation managed by the University of the Basque Country in Spain, from which we received two interns, Aitor Garcia and Itziar Varela. Global Training provides its interns with a stipend, flights and accommodation, and a six-month internship. The aim of the programme is to offer students from various universities a chance to travel abroad and undertake an internship aligned with their studies. These interns were warmly welcomed and enjoyed their internships, and we look forward to a long-term collaboration with Global Training.

For the first time, SANCCOB hosted Namibian students from the Namibia University of Science and Technology. This programme was funded by the University of Pretoria, and Nathanael Brave and Lucrensia Ndelitunga participated in a three-month seabird internship programme, which provided them with the practical skills necessary to act as seabird First Responders. We are very proud of this initiative and look forward to further collaborations with the Namibia University of Science and Technology.

TYPES OF INTERNSHIPS



TOTAL: 47*

*Excluding cancellations

ANIMAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

We are fortunate to have international animal professionals working with African penguins at our donor entities, visit SANCCOB for two-week periods to improve capacity when we need hands on-site, and also to share our expertise with them. Due to travel and other restrictions imposed by Covid-19, SANCCOB welcomed one animal professional from Turtle Back Zoo in New Jersey, USA. Brittany Bishop joined the team for two weeks at the beginning of 2022. We are pleased to note that, with the ease of Covid-19 travel restrictions, bookings have started to increase and we are scheduled to receive more individuals later in 2022.

VET EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME

SANCCOB offers opportunities for observation and learning for individuals aspiring to a career in veterinary medicine. The Vet Experience Programme has been popular in the past year, with most of the participants coming from South Africa. However, with the lifting of Covid-19 travel restrictions, an increasing number of internationals are registering for the programme.

VET EXPERIENCE

1	ANGOLA
1	GERMANY
1	INDIA
1	SWITZERLAND
2	U.S.A.
18	SOUTH AFRICA

TOTAL: 24*

*Excluding cancellations

Volunteers enjoying an after-work social at SANCCOB Cape Town

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Throughout the reporting period, SANCCOB's team emphasised showing appreciation to the volunteers and interns who dedicated time and energy to help us save seabirds.

In December, two appreciation events were organised for SANCCOB's First Responders to thank them for dedicating their time to rescue seabirds and transport them to SANCCOB for rehabilitative care. The first gathering was hosted by long-term First Responders and SANCCOB members, Evanne and Terry Rothwell, at their home in Fish Hoek, and the second gathering was held at a restaurant in Paternoster and the First Responders shared stories of the many bird rescues they had assisted with over the years. Having undergone some emotionally challenging times responding to the Avian Influenza outbreak, and witnessing the devastating affect on Cape cormorants, those who attended the gatherings had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

As the SANCCOB team are an essential service and are available 365 days per year, 7 days per week, Christmas Day celebrations were held at the centres for staff, interns and volunteers working on the day, and a wonderful lunch was enjoyed by all.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

The financial results reported on reflect a 12-month period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. SANCCOB's conservation work is supported by local and international partners, working with us to reverse the decline of wild seabird populations in southern Africa.

SANCCOB NPC
(Registration number: 2001/026273/08)

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

FIGURES IN RANDS	12 MONTHS ENDED 31 MARCH 2022	12 MONTHS ENDED 31 MARCH 2021
Revenue	16 313 854	15 102 285
Cost of sales	(343 922)	(201 153)
Gross profit	**15 969 932**	**14 901 132**
Other income	652 451	615 455
Operating expenses	(17 904 631)	(17 075 758)
Operating loss	**(1 282 248)**	**(1 559 171)**
Investment revenue	408 620	633 981
Fair value adjustments	1 187 203	925 232
Finance costs	(145)	(42)
Profit for the year	**313 430**	**-**
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	**313 430**	**-**

Conclusion: The above is an extract of the Statement of Comprehensive Income reflected on page 9 of the audited Annual Financial Statements. The Annual Financial Statements are available on request.

CURRENT STAFF & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CURRENT STAFF

AIDAN BELLINGAN
Rehabilitation Supervisor EC

ALBERT SNYMAN
Researcher

ALEX ROGERS
Educator

ANNDONIA EALES
Receptionist

BERNADETTE PAYNE
Bird Rehabilitator EC

BRITTANY LOWE
Volunteer & Intern Coordinator

CJ HAVEMANN
Centre Manager EC

CALISTA VAN ZYL
Administrator EC

CURTLY AMBROSE
Bird Rehabilitator

DR DAVID ROBERTS
Clinical Veterinarian

DEBORAH LAYNE
Bird Rehabilitator EC

DELENE GOCH
Accountant

GAVIN PETERSEN
Stony Point Assistant Marine Ranger

DR KATTA LUDYNIA
Research Manager

KIRSTIE PAULSE
Marketing & Fundraising Coordinator EC

KYLE MAURER
Bird Rehabilitator

MARLIZE VAN DER MERWE
Resource Developer: Group

MEGAN MCCARTHY
Data Administrator

MELISSA CADMAN
Chick Rearing Unit Supervisor

MELISSA-ANN KNOTT
Head of Operations

MICHELLE LIEBENBERG
Bird Rehabilitator

MONICA STASSEN
Preparedness & Response Manager

NATALIE MASKELL
Chief Executive Officer

NICHOLAS NGCATHU
Robben Island Penguin & Seabird Ranger

NICOLA STANDER
Head of Conservation

NOLEEN CHITEWERE
Housekeeper

PETER VAN DER LINDE
Bird Rehabilitator

ROMY KLUSENER
Rehabilitation Manager

RONNIS DANIELS
Resource Development Manager

RUSHAAN MARTHEZE
Procurement & Inventory Officer

SHARNAY WAGNER
Education Supervisor WC

SIBONGILE GEORGE
Rehabilitation Assistant

SIMBONILE MDUNYELWA
Education Supervisor EC

TONIA WYNGAARD
Resource Developer: Individuals

ZAMOKUHLE LAZOLA
Bird Island Penguin & Seabird Ranger

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DR SAMANTHA PETERSEN
Chairperson

INGE CILLIERS
Treasurer

NATALIE MASKELL
Chief Executive Officer

DR ANTON WOLFAARDT
Board Director

DR AZWIANEWI MAKHADO
Board Director

VERNON BOULLE
Board Director

In addition to staff listed, SANCCOB also funds the placement of four Penguin and Seabird Rangers in Simon's Town.

FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS

R5,000 – R9,999

- 3rd House Design
- A-Gas South Africa (Pty) Ltd
- B1 Systems GmbH
- Baber, J
- Baling, B
- BirdLife Plettenberg Bay
- Brinkworth, M
- Burmaster, M
- Catherwood, L
- Charalambides, E
- CES Unified School District
- Daikoku, Y
- Dasgupta, S
- Google Inc.
- Hammer, S
- Kruger, J
- Kunkel, C
- Kunz, G
- Lopez, I
- Maragon Olympus School
- Nel, LA
- Papenfus, L
- Penguin Fund of Japan
- Prinsloo, B
- Reichl, F
- Run Wild Races and Metro Richmond Zoo
- Salerno, S
- Schmidt, S
- Sea Life Paris
- Shadowlands Wholesale Nursery
- Strydom, M
- Superina, L
- Taurus Cape Kelp
- Tecmed Africa (Pty) Ltd
- The DebSchein Trust
- The Royal Portfolio - Silo Hotel

R10,000 – R19,999

- Abel, M
- Bellingan, L
- Chapman, D
- Cockcroft, H
- De Klerk, BE
- Der Grüne Zoo Wuppertal
- Erie Zoo
- Foord, B
- Fourie, N
- Gardmed Ambulance Service
- Gutsche Investment and Management Company (Pty) Ltd.
- Honolulu Zoological Society
- Isa Carstens Academy
- Jenkinson's Aquarium
- Kaleck Capital (Pty) Ltd.
- Katie Adamson Conservation Fund
- Kotze, J
- McCreadie, R
- Namibia Bird Club
- Newall, A
- Parklands Superspar
- Rosamond Gifford Zoo
- Ross, V
- Sherry, R
- Truworths CSI
- Veilleux, M
- von Leesen, A and K
- W J Weise Charitable Trust
- Woodhill College
- ZooTampa at Lowry Park

R20,000 – R49,999

- Ackerman, W
- AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals
- Columbus AAZK Chapter
- Global Navigators (Pty) Ltd.
- Henry Vilas Zoo
- Ingram, E
- Jacobs, J
- Jenner, D
- La Palmyre Zoo
- Little Rock Zoo
- Masser, C
- Monterey Bay Aquarium
- MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet
- National Aviary Pittsburgh
- Nausicaá Centre National de la Mer – Boulogne sur Mer
- Océarium du Croisic
- Pistoia Zoo
- Planet Ocean Montpellier
- Schneier, S
- Sea Life Paris
- Seneca Park Zoo Society
- South African Marine Fuels (Pty) Ltd
- Spar Eastern Cape
- Sunshine Aquarium
- The Leers Charitable Trust
- Thorpe, S
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R50,000 – R99,999

- Adventure Aquarium
- Boswell, J
- Cheyenne Mountain Zoo
- Dallas Zoo
- De Beers Marine Namibia
- Dierenpark Amersfoort (DierenPark Amersfoort Wildlife Fund)
- Fondation Ensemble
- Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens
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- Mapula Trust
- Meier, N
- Moody Gardens
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- The Florida Aquarium
- Tulsa Zoo
- Zoo Basel

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- Aachener Tierpark
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